

# **STORYTELLING IN THE SECONDARY ENGLISH CLASSROOM:**

theoretical and empirical perspectives relevant to  
the development of literacy

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph. D. in Education,  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that oral storytelling by pupils in the secondary English classroom has a potential neglected by teachers and the education system in Britain.

Part One considers the history of traditions of storytelling from pre-literate times, through the development of communication technologies, the increase in the numbers of readers in the population and the development of schooled literacy, foregrounding oral continuities. It traces the development of the traditional concept of literacy as a neutral technology of the intellect, arguing against the notion of an oral-literate divide. It supports a revised conceptualisation of oral-literate relations which accepts that, in any society, there are multiple literacies. From a developmental perspective, it insists on the centrality of oral narrative discourse to the individual's thinking and sense of social identity. Finally, it reviews narratological theories and shows that the application of some of them to the transcripts of oral stories can reveal the literary competences of tellers.

Part Two applies theory drawn from authorities consulted in Part One to data collected in English lessons where 12/13 year old pupils performed oral stories for an audience of their peers (public performances) or alone with a tape-recorder (private performances). The multiple contexts of the empirical study and the collection of data are described; ethnographic and discourse analyses of the public performances are presented through a

paradigmatic instance. The findings of the textual analyses of ten exemplars are scrutinised and three related but separate significances identified in them, all signs of pupils' communicative and narrative competence. The private performances are analysed separately, using categories drawn from literary theory; comparative analyses reveal literary competences in experienced and inexperienced readers alike and enable an outline developmental perspective on literary competences to be constructed. On the basis of the findings of this work, the educational validity of oral storytelling in the secondary English classroom is asserted as a form of inclusive social justice.



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(N.B. Small font, e.g. will we ever get home tonight? is used throughout for transcripts of pupils' oral stories and for copies of their written stories; *italic* style is used for sound effects and phonological information relating to transcripts, e.g. 'I'm all right' (*protesting tone*)).

## **INTRODUCTION:**

### The Origins of the Inquiry

This study derives from my interest in the deliberate use of oral storytelling by pupils in the secondary English classroom, an interest with roots in my experience as a teacher in several such classrooms. By way of introduction, I first consider the differing weights traditionally given to written and spoken narratives in subject English and the possible reasons for the imbalance. I counterpose a condensed account of the outcomes of extended scholarly debate about the importance of narrative in human life which implies that a reappraisal of the use of oral narrative by pupils is in order. I then revisit an English lesson where, as a probationary teacher, I worked with 12/13 year old pupils; reflecting on this lesson and its implications leads me to formulate the crucial question my thesis addresses.

#### 1. Spoken and written narrative in the secondary English classroom

Secondary English teachers offer their pupils novels, short stories, narrative poems, newspaper reports, broadcasts, films and plays for enjoyment or critical appraisal. They elicit from them autobiographical and fictional diaries, reports, film- and play-scripts and stories of all kinds and lengths; all of these narratives are writing-based, even when their final presentation is in another medium, as in the case of, say, radio or video programmes. The conscious and deliberate use of oral narrative as an end in itself, either by teachers or by pupils under their direction, has not been widely practised. There are many reasons why the written mode dominates activities in the English classroom: our print-saturated social environment ensures that anyone labelled 'illiterate' is considered to be, and feels they are, a social cripple; in both the National

Curriculum and the public examinations system, priority is always given to testing in writing, since the tangible and durable nature of writing renders its assessment much easier than that of speech. Further, written outcomes in the classroom are equated with 'real work' and discipline and this belief puts enormous pressure on the English teacher to involve pupils constantly in writing. The pressure comes from teachers themselves and from pupils and their parents, as well as from school management teams, from the National Curriculum, from inspectors and from the requirements of public examinations. Assessment of work in the oral mode is regarded as inconvenient, difficult and time-consuming. Pupils' oral narratives are likely to be expressions of their personal perspectives on life and as such may be seen as potential causes of problems of control in the classroom. Although the telling of personal narratives by teachers in the classroom is generally acceptable, those of pupils are often regarded as intrusive or a cause of distraction. As Dell Hymes observes in relation to students and lecturers, '*the right to think and express thought in narrative comes to be taken as a privilege,....., so that the right to unite position and personal experience in public is a badge of status and rank.*' (Hymes, 1996:119).

## 2. The importance of narrative in human life

Just as there has never been a people without a language, so there has probably never been a society in which people did not tell stories (Thompson, 1951). The universality, pervasiveness and significance of narrative in human life has been exhaustively discussed by writers in the fields of literary theory, literature, folklore and education. The salient outcomes of this debate can be summarised as follows:



- narrative is a primary human way of making sense of experience. Through the narratives they tell themselves and others, people represent and structure their world, gain a sense of identity and take a perspective on events. Narrative connects the personal and social; however private or internalized a narrative may be, it is always dependent upon prior social experience, social memory, social discourse and social action, just as language is;
- stories, which are conventionally shaped narratives, include not only events but also feelings and motives; they can include both rational explanations and imagined possibilities and, sometimes, fantasy; it is likely that they are essential to human survival (Thompson, 1951, op.cit.; Hardy, 1977; Leguin, 1980; Eagleton, 1983; Rosen, 1986; Meek, 1991);
- stories, like other aesthetic forms , are created by individuals in particular historical, social and political contexts. They can be seen as 'symbolic acts' in which experience on several levels is grasped and converted into aesthetic form. Such acts are necessarily ideological, expressions of their creators' own perspectives on life. They have the function of '*inventing imaginary or formal solutions to unresolvable contradictions*' (Jameson 1981:79);
- the shared public stories of a society provide its members with linguistic paradigms embodying their common identity, history and values. Since language '*constitutes both the most important content and the most important instrument of socialization*' (Berger and Luckmann

(1966: 153), the transmission of such stories from one generation to the next is an important way of providing cultural continuity (Havelock, 1963).

3. An autobiographical perspective: the teacher moves from reading aloud to telling a story

I now revisit a lesson where oral storytelling came on to the agenda by accident, throwing into relief some of the benefits of such activity, although I have remembered what happened for other reasons. I reconstruct the lesson, which began with my reading a novel aloud to the class, as a narrative event within contexts of school, class, teacher and text.

3.1. The school context

1954: An inner London secondary school for girls, housed in a late 19th century three-storey building, surrounded by asphalt play grounds and a high brick wall. Beyond the wall were close-packed tenements and streets of small terraced houses where many of the pupils lived in poverty and faced multiple social problems of the sort that are even more familiar in the 1990s. The school was known as a 'sink' school. There had been a heavily repressive regime in the past and, it was rumoured, razor-slashing of coats in the cloakroom. In 1953, an energetic headteacher had been appointed who was making changes designed to raise the sights of pupils and teachers and to improve the school's reputation. These changes included the adoption of a school uniform so that girls from the poorest families could claim local authority uniform grants and therefore be decently dressed, the introduction of vocational courses for the fifteen year old leavers and the appointment of new

and newly qualified teachers who were to provide a basis for a new pattern of organisation. I arrived in 1954 as part of this new regime. Although the Education Act of 1944 had established the tri-partite system of grammar, technical and modern secondary schools, in 1954, this particular school was still run very largely as a pre-war senior school or contemporary primary school. There were no subject departments and no one took any public examinations.

### 3.2 The class context

In 1954, the school was crowded and, in order to keep numbers down in the lowest stream in each year, there were large numbers in the other streams. The second year 'A' stream, which I now focus on, contained 39 pupils, amongst whom there was a wide variation in achievement in reading and writing. Most of them were lively and some were very volatile. In the previous year, this class had been taught for most of the time by one teacher who, it was rumoured, used a degree of terror to keep control; slapping had not been uncommon. She continued to teach the class for Mathematics in their second year. I understood that most girls in the class still respected her but were glad to have escaped her total control; at the same time, they probably felt ambivalent about 'soft' young teachers.

### 3.3 The teacher

I was a probationary teacher in my first post. The P.G.C.E. course I had done the previous year assumed that I would work in a grammar school, my teaching practice school had been a girls' grammar school and, as a pupil, I had attended a girls' grammar school. Thus, there was a wide gap between my

expectations of my pupils and those implied by their school. This gap became clear when I opened the stock cupboard. The resources provided for teaching English were text-books containing exercises in vocabulary, spelling and grammar, passages for comprehension and model letters, some dusty 'Beacon' readers, poetry anthologies and sets of *One Act Plays for Girls*. The total absence of novels suggested that this form of literature had not been thought necessary so far. My stance as a teacher in this school was that of a missionary; I wanted to apply there what I had learnt during my previous year on the P.G.C.E. course. In particular, I wanted to read some novels with my pupils and did not accept that they were less capable than those in the grammar school where I had worked as a student teacher. I brought in single copies of paper-backs for children, published by Penguin Books under the Puffin imprint. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* ( Samuel L.Clemens/ 'Mark Twain', orig. 1876) was one of these.

#### 3.4 The text: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

I felt that this book's humorous view of childhood where adults are frequently outwitted, dangerous escapades happen without their knowledge and romantic feelings between Tom Sawyer and Becky Thatcher are described, would commend it to my class. One great advantage was the division of the action into dramatic episodes with plenty of dialogue in the vernacular. In the course of my preparation, I edited the book, dividing it into manageable chunks of a suitable length for reading aloud in a lesson. Through this process, I became very familiar with the whole story. The extract which I particularly remember and will now focus upon is in Chapter Eighteen. Here, Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn and Joe Harper return home from the river island where they have been camping and secretly witness a chapel service being held in their memory,

because the community thinks they have drowned in the river. My intention was to read the whole chapter, ending with: '..the three dead boys came marching up the aisle...' and then the tailpiece of reconciliation and rejoicing.

### 3.5 The narrative event

The setting is a classroom on the top floor. The high windows of this room are designed to exclude the outside world and the turquoise walls, cleaned only half way up, present no distractions. There are nineteen iron-framed double desks with hinged seats screwed to the floor in straight rows facing the blackboard, in front of which is the teacher's desk, upon a dais. The rows of desks are filled with 38 girls. A young probationary teacher is standing at the front, reading aloud from her book; the girls appear to be listening, quietly receptive. In spite of appearances, the activity which is going on does not match its setting, for the teacher and the class are sharing a very different world, the fictional rural world of Mississippi in the early 1840s, peopled by fictional characters. It could be claimed that the author/storyteller is transmitting his words to the listeners through the voice of the teacher/reader. She is trying to sustain an American accent and to dramatise the reading, assuming different voices for different characters. After a time, the teacher relaxes a little, feeling that the class are into the tale. She glances at them occasionally, but must look mostly at her book to follow the editing and keep the story going. Later, she becomes aware, from some movement or whispering at the edges of the group, that she is beginning to lose their attention. She ignores the slight disturbance for a while, but it does not fade away. Then, she lowers her book and looks at the class, trying to identify the disrupters who are now quiet again. She must choose whether to break out of the fictional world created by the reading, in order to object to the interruption,

or to carry on telling the story, keeping eye contact with the class right to the end. She chooses the second option and, to her amazement, the class appear to listen and to share her pleasure in the reconciliations and celebration which take place at the end of the episode, when the grieving adults realise the boys are still very much alive. She remembers the incident in the first place as a way of retaining control of a difficult class.

### 3.6 Comment

To decide what might have been happening in this lesson ( for there are no absolute certainties) and why the transmission of Mark Twain's story did not get lost before the end in a welter of classroom activity and unconnected talk, two questions need to be answered:

\*why did the class listen to the story in the first place, when it was being read from the book?

\*why did the oral telling of the story succeed in retaining their attention when the reading had begun to fail?

I believe the class listened to the story for at least three main reasons: first, they were predisposed to listen, providing it was the right kind of story, since narrative is the most usual and the most effective way human beings have of ordering their own experience and representing it to themselves (Hardy 1977, op.cit.). All their prior experience of listening to stories told and read could be said to have prepared them for this occasion. Secondly, I can assume that it was, as I had hoped, the right kind of story, since the class listened to it for a considerable length of time. Story listeners, like story makers and story readers

take on a spectator role; they attend to the events and characters of the story, evaluating them according to their own experience of life. However, they will only keep on listening if the story has some relevance to their own important life concerns (Britton 1977). I believe the episode did have this kind of relevance; it touched upon the imagined deaths of children, on grief and funeral rites, on being lost and being found, on being told off and being forgiven, on being ostracised and being accepted, on children outwitting adults and being independent. The emotions evoked: grief, guilt, relief and joy, are all powerfully experienced in the lives of twelve and thirteen year olds. Thirdly, the story raises questions and creates suspense and mystery before resolving them. When the episode begins, readers and listeners know what the congregation does not know: that the boys are alive. They do not know when or how the fact will be revealed to the townsfolk. Their curiosity is eventually satisfied, but not until the memorial service is almost complete and both preacher and congregation are in tears. Only then, when suspense is stretched to its limit, do the 'three dead boys' appear. People have an insistent need to know how a story (or episode) ends.

I cannot say why the story reading began to lose the listeners' attention; perhaps the quality was deteriorating, or it had gone on for too long and dinner-time was near. I am sure, however, that the telling worked because it was a qualitatively different happening from the reading. I can say this with confidence because I have had a similar experience on many occasions since then. The telling of a story without the support of a book is more like an extended turn in conversation. Crucially, the teller makes, and (ideally) sustains, eye-contact with the listeners, who return the gaze because that is what we naturally do, providing we have at least some interest in what is being said. A telling is a communicative performance, like an instrumental or

singing performance or a stand-up comedy routine. In any performance the listeners expect that the performer is in possession of his or her material, even though they may know that an author/ composer/ scriptwriter invented it. During a performance without book, score or script, the inventor is, as it were, out of sight. This fact lends the story teller authority which the story reader does not necessarily seem to have, since the book is a tangible reminder of its author. Also, the teller, freed from the book, is able to move about making gestures, making faces, assuming different voices- in short, dramatising the story, bringing it to life.

This brief narrative event ruptured the barrier between the culture of the school ( reading a novel which the girls would not have come across anywhere else at that time) and the girls' everyday experience of stories in their lives outside the classroom and the school, most obviously in conversation. Thus, the class and I were engaged in what was, for both of us, a familiar kind of discursive activity in which, on this occasion, I took the productive, they the receptive role.

#### 4. The crucial question

Reflecting on this early teaching experience raises the crucial question which this thesis addresses:

*\*Since individuals master narrative discourse as a form of communication, what social, educational and pedagogical benefits could there be from including oral storytelling by pupils in the secondary English curriculum?*



## **PART ONE: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

## CHAPTER ONE:

### The Focus of the Inquiry

This chapter begins with the presentation of two further, very different, English lessons where oral narrative made an unplanned appearance. These instances raise further questions about oral storytelling in secondary English which structure my inquiry.

#### 1. The teacher tells a story

##### 1.1 The school context

1970: A mixed 11-18 comprehensive school in an outer London borough. In 1966 this school, for many years a prestigious suburban grammar, with a large sixth form, became a comprehensive overnight, on paper. The catchment area was greatly enlarged and the annual intake of first year pupils doubled in size, from four classes to eight. Suddenly, a completely new kind of pupil, whose home circumstances and level of schooled literacy in English were not what the school was used to and for whom English was sometimes a second or third language, appeared. Despite the abruptness and the magnitude of this change, for several years there was no provision of systematic pastoral care, or support with language or special needs.

##### 1.2 The class context

A fourth year class (eighth stream in a hierarchy of eight) which had been part of the first comprehensive intake of pupils. As in the previous school described, the lowest stream had the privilege of small numbers; in this case,

there were only fifteen on roll and several of them were often absent. Five boys and one girl in the class had English as their mother tongue; the girl and one of the boys were twins who spoke with a strong Irish accent. Then, there were those for whom English was a language not spoken at home: one boy was from an Italian family and the remaining boys and girls were of Cypriot background, some speaking Greek, some Turkish. Among this second group there were different levels of fluency in English. Most of the pupils in this class lacked confidence (not surprising since they were labelled as being amongst the least able in a big school) and some of them were frequently bullied. Several came from minority ethnic groups and some of them certainly had an insecure grasp of English.

### 1.3 The teacher

I was now working in a large department of specialist English teachers, where idealism was high. The department had designed and was running a Mode 3 C.S.E. English examination which was dual-certificated ( in language and literature). Pupils assembled a folder of written work to be graded after five terms by the department, with external moderation.

### 1.4 The text: 'First Confession' by Frank O'Connor

'First Confession' is part of a collection of stories of childhood set in Ireland in the 1920s: *My Oedipus Complex and Other Stories* ( O'Connor, 1963). I had found the book, previously used with G.C.E. O level classes, in the stock cupboard and had been using it in the hope that it would provoke some personal talk and, I hoped, autobiographical writing for the folder, from my strangely assorted class.

### 1.5 The narrative event

A mobile classroom ; a teacher and a group of ten or twelve pupils sit informally in a group. Only the teacher has a book in front of her. The pupils sit quietly, apparently listening as, without reference to her book, she describes a seven year old boy's preparation for his first communion and his dread of making his first confession. To make it clear why he is so worried, she explains how he feels about his grandmother and his sister. She begins to read aloud from the book at the point where the boy finally enters the dark confessional. He assumes that he must kneel on a small shelf (which is really for adults to rest their elbows on) whilst confessing to the priest through a grille. As she reads the description of the physical contortions that the boy and the priest go through in trying to communicate with one another, the teacher is reduced to helpless laughter. The class remain silent for a while, then, they start laughing too and one of the twins offers the teacher a tissue to wipe her eyes. Everybody laughs. Eventually, when the teacher has regained her composure, she goes over the episode again orally, demonstrating the positions the boy and the priest had got into. There is more laughter. Then she tells the end of the story. The Irish twins, who are Catholics, tell the class about their own experience of first communion and so does Tony, the Italian speaker. The lesson comes to an end with a sharing of experiences connected with religious worship.

### 1.6 Comment

No doubt this narrative event has remained clear in my memory because of my own loss of composure but it was also important because it represented a

turning point in the life of the class. From being a motley collection of individuals who had to go to the same room at certain times for an English lesson, they began to become a friendly learning community. It was some time after this lesson that the Greek girls, who had been very quiet at the beginning of the year, came up with a plan for us all to go one Saturday afternoon to a West End cinema to see the film *'Love Story'*. The girls' parents, who would not normally allow them out, permitted the trip because, as their teacher, I could act as chaperone. I remember that the girls sobbed so much at the film that they made a whole row of seats shake. I believe the shape the lesson took was beneficial. First, my laughter was a spontaneous response to O'Connor's story which the pupils shared even before they had been helped, by the enacted telling, to understand it. Thus, the incident resonated with the spontaneity of conversation when a joke or an anecdote is shared. Secondly, it is likely that some/most of the class *needed* the story to be acted out, so that they could understand the language they were hearing; such dramatisation fits more readily into an oral telling than a reading. Thirdly, the pupils who responded to O'Connor's story with accounts of their own experiences of worship were able to take on, for a few minutes, the confidence-building role of expert.

## 2. The pupil tells her own invented story

### 2.1 The school context

1983: a co-educational first tier comprehensive school for 11-14 year olds which is also a community college in a rural/suburban area. The pupils, drawn from surrounding villages, constitute a monocultural (white British), largely homogeneous group (lower-middle and working class).

## 2.2 The inexperienced reader in the class context

A mixed-ability class of second year (Year 8) boys and girls, all aged 12 or 13. Within the class, I focus on an inexperienced reader, Emma, who persistently tried to avoid reading and writing tasks and had a record of poor school attendance. At the time of her performance, she was time-tabled for 'Extra English' (remedial help with reading and writing) when the rest of the class had French.

## 2.3 The teacher

Mrs. B., a young woman, with seven years teaching experience, all in this school. I was present in the classroom, in the role of participant-observer.

## 2.4 The text: *School Under Siege* (ILEA English Centre, 1982).

The text was a resource booklet based on the following story outline: a school, real or imaginary, is put into quarantine because a pupil there has contracted a serious, previously unknown, contagious disease. Pupils are invited to choose from a selection of tasks which include: making a page for a future illustrated medical dictionary, detailing symptoms and treatment of the new disease, writing a letter home as if from one of the pupils asking for a few personal belongings to be sent in, concocting a diary of the events of the siege, writing poems, devising schedules and rotas, scripting and recording radio/T.V. news broadcasts.

## 2.5 The narrative event

The teacher had spent a lesson the previous week, when Emma had been present, preparing the class for their work on the booklet. She had read through it with them, discussing its possibilities. In a subsequent lesson, when the class had begun working either individually, in pairs or in small groups, Emma had been absent. The lesson under discussion, where Emma was back in school, began with the teacher talking briefly to the whole class, giving instructions about the use of equipment. After that, the pupils organised themselves, getting on with the tasks they had chosen from the booklet. Some, role-playing journalists and parents, were recording interviews about the 'emergency', prior to writing newspaper reports; others were engaged in transactional writing. The teacher moved around, working with pairs, groups or individuals, as she thought necessary. Emma took a tape recorder and a tape; I offered her a booklet, asking what she would choose to do first. She refused the booklet and said she was going to tell a story. Then, sitting by herself, she inserted the tape, bent over the recorder and talked into it with total concentration for about 30 minutes. Not once did she allow herself to be interrupted in her self-imposed task, even when one boy tried hard to distract her. What she recorded was not, as the casual observer might have assumed, a recent personal experience, an anecdote she had heard or a retelling of the story of a film but her own invented story which she later called 'Virus Hit School'.

## 2.6 'Virus Hit School': summary

One Monday morning, a teacher takes her class into the Drama Studio, where some of the pupils perform a play. The play involves one boy taking the role

of a professor handling a dangerous chemical. The boy, in role, sniffs the chemical fumes, faints and then revives. Later, the same boy is unwell again and is taken into the sick room where, once he is alone, he changes into a vampire. In this guise, he attacks a secretary who then also becomes a vampire. Two more similar transformations, of male teachers, take place. Now there are four monsters loose in the school. The school is locked and the pupils are told by a teacher that they must stay there overnight. Clothes and bedding are brought by helicopter. The pupils set about transforming their surroundings; they write home for personal belongings to be sent in and, with these, they re-arrange and decorate the rooms of the school so that they become more like home. Finally, when the monsters start to rip down the doors of the building, a female laboratory technician pours another chemical over the monsters and changes them back into human form. The story ends, '----and everything back to normal /and everyone went home/ the end'.

## 2.7 Comment

Emma displayed what was, for her, unusual independence when she chose to tell a story, a task not among the options offered by the resource-booklet, or by her teacher. Usually, she would be unsure of what to do and would rely heavily on teacher support. However, the previous year, when, as her English teacher, I had been unable to persuade her to do any writing in class, I had asked her to record a story in the privacy of the book store. She had worked well then and I had praised what she did; perhaps she was reminded of that success by my presence in the classroom on the day she recorded 'Virus Hit School'. Other people were also using tape-recorders this time, so she did not need to feel conspicuous, even though she was in the middle of the classroom. I assume she had spotted an opportunity to do something she could succeed at, which was also a way of fulfilling her new teacher's demand, possibly a way of impressing her. On the tape, Emma's voice sounds confident as she blends material from the resource booklet with material from her own life in and out of school and with memories of the film, 'Count Dracula', which she had seen on video. I listened to the tape several times and, having



transcribed it, studied the text. Repeated listenings and readings made me realise that what she had done was more unusual than it seemed at first sight. The following comments are based on my early reflections noted after this.

'Virus Hit School' is a fantasy set in a storyworld based on Emma's own school, peopled with characters based on people she knew, including members of the English class who were in the room as she spoke. She involved these characters in a series of temporally and causally linked events driven by a series of magical transformations followed by reversals, not unlike those to be found in a fairytale. She produced an extended stretch of language, a narrative consisting of 1,327 words; this was something which never happened when she was asked to write. She enacts her tale, using different 'voices' for different characters; there is the brisk teacher: 'all right then, kids. I'll have you in to the Drama studio', the mysterious, foreign-sounding professor: 'this is a very dangerous chemical', and the frightened pupils: 'will we ever get home tonight?'. Her audible pleasure makes it clear that she is engaged in a sort of play; this is particularly striking in the passages about the various transformations. She takes especial pleasure in the subversive parts of her story, as when a person important in the fictional school hierarchy loses his clothes. As storyteller, she assumed a powerful role, manipulating the characters in her tale, especially those representing authority figures or people she was afraid of. The text, made visible in the transcript, has a clear beginning and ending and a plot structure which shows a confident manipulation of time as well as other narrative techniques Emma had never revealed in writing. She had not been taught to do any of this.

### 3. Further questions

These two examples raise further questions, all of which are subsumed within my 'crucial question':

- *Since individuals master narrative discourse as a form of communication, what social, educational and pedagogical benefits could there be from including oral storytelling by pupils in the secondary English curriculum?*

First, there are questions to be asked from a historical perspective, at the societal level:

- *What is the historical dimension of oral stories told by pupils in school today?*
- *How do modern children and young people connect with the story traditions of the past?*
- *Why does the education system not treat the oral and written modes equally?*

and at the level of the individual:

- *How do children learn to tell stories?*
- *What role does storytelling have in the personal development of children and young people?*

Secondly, there are questions concerning pupils and teachers in the educational context:

- *Are there possible strengths of pupils' oral language that are being ignored in the secondary English curriculum?*
- *What can teachers learn from a 12/13 year old, who persistently avoids writing and yet is able to compose complex stories orally?*

Seeking answers to all of these questions, I first consulted relevant literature in the fields of literary history, folklore studies, literacy studies, language development, developmental psychology, education studies and social linguistics (Gee 1990/1996). A review of this reading in the light of my questions, indicating both the answers it provided and what it left unanswered, is presented in Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five, which constitute the remainder of Part One. Part Two features my own empirical study, its context and methodology, my analyses of the data collected and my findings.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### The History of the Oral Tradition in Britain

#### Introduction

Emma chose to tell her invented story rather than to write it because this was what she could do best. Her choice of the oral mode she used out of lessons and out of school throws into relief her historical connection with oral storytellers of the past. This chapter and Chapter Three draw on work in the fields of Folklore Studies, Social and Literary History, Literacy Studies and Sociology of Literature, in order to answer the first two of my 'further questions' (p.30):

- *What is the historical dimension of oral stories told by pupils in school today?*
- *How do modern children and young people connect with the story traditions of the past?*

The present chapter is a diachronic account of the oral tradition of telling the shared stories of the culture in Britain; it begins before writing was used for literary purposes and extends up to the present, to include storytelling by pupils in school today. First, the account outlines the various categories of story which folklorists have identified in oral tradition: myths, legends and folktales, then it focuses on one particular kind of folktale: the fairytale. The defining features of the fairytale are listed, its origins are discussed and its descent from preliterate times to the

present is traced. Central to the whole is the re-creation of the oral fairytale as a *literary genre*, which has since become a cultural institution in the Western world and has been re-created in many versions including opera, ballet, pantomime, silent films, cartoons, comics, picture books, audio-tapes and video-games. The account is divided into roughly dated periods according to dominant technologies of communication, as follows:

- pre-literate culture;
- manuscript culture (1000-1500);
- early print culture (1500-1800);
- mass print culture (1800-1900+);
- electronically mediated culture (1900-2000+).

Stories are always integral to the culture in which they occur, as are the communication technologies through which they are realised; as they change over time, both are always implicated in struggles over voice and socialization. Stories have expressed social conflict symbolically in different ways, at different times. Throughout history, there have been observable continuities and repetitions in patterns of control, distribution and access to communication technologies and to education, whereby dominant social groups have been empowered and other groups have been excluded from power. Accordingly, attention is paid, throughout the account, to changing relations between the producers and the receivers of

stories and to contexts of power and ideology (Pattison, 1983; Finnegan, 1988; Zipes, 1997).

Underlying the cultural changes which are charted here is the unbroken thread of the oral mode, stretching from pre-literate times to the present. The generative principles of language and narrative are universal (Hymes 1996) and, therefore, we can be certain that everyday face-to-face social interaction has always included narratives of personal experience, anecdotes and gossip, passed on through informal conversation. *'The basic orality of language is permanent'* ( Ong, 1982: 7); without it, there would be no tradition of telling, writing, printing or broadcasting the shared stories of any culture. The chapter concludes by making explicit the connections between modern young storytellers in the school context and the story traditions they are heirs to.

#### 1. The period of pre-literate culture

The tribe, or clan, of the pre-literate period was an organisation of small kinship groups, inter-related for economic and social reasons and grouped around a chieftain or sacral king. Life in tribal society was precarious, and survival depended on the cohesion of the kindred: the king sheltered and fed his warriors and in return, they fought with and for him (Morton 1951). The communication technology was rhetorical: the persuasive power of the speaking voice using the common language in face-to-face communication. The special distinguishing features of this language when it was used for creating oral verbal art can be guessed from the evidence provided by early Old English manuscripts and from the practices of analogous societies in the modern world.

The poem *Beowulf* survives in a single manuscript, which was probably made about the year 1,000 A.D. The subject of the poem is the youth and age of Beowulf, a warrior with superhuman powers, who receives help from God; he fights and overcomes three monsters, dying himself in the third fight. The poem is thought to have taken its present shape in the 8th century and, since it relates historical events in southern Scandinavia independently dated as occurring during the 5th and 6th centuries, we can assume that it had been circulating orally for a long time before it was written down. It is, therefore, reasonable to examine the manuscript for traces of its oral past. (Alexander, 1973; Drabble 1984). Memory and memory-supports such as rhythm, rhyme and set patterns of words, are essential to those who must speak their history, genealogy, mythology and stories. Such features are an integral part of *Beowulf*; it has a strong alliterative beat and uses a repertoire of formulaic phrases and type-scenes, mnemonic devices which suggest oral composition-in-performance of the kind identified in the Homeric epics and found in this century among Yugoslav oral epic poets (Lord 1960; Parry 1971).

Besides being a text which reminds us of its prior existence in a totally oral culture, the world depicted in *Beowulf* provides an insight into the social function of literature in non-literate, tribal society and the relationship between storyteller and audience. Living under constant threat of attack from other tribes, such a society must reiterate its origins and its history and celebrate its heroes, in order to build and retain a sense of identity and social cohesion. Only a performer close to and well known to the people, one who, in effect is 'one of them' is able to respond to such communal needs. The poem provides several instances of such performances: King

Hrothgar's poet, the scop, recites the origin myths of the people before the assembled warriors in the hall:

*'He told how, long ago, the Lord formed earth,  
a plain bright to look on, locked in ocean,  
exulting, established the sun and the moon  
as light to illumine the land dwellers  
and furnished forth the face of Earth  
with limbs and leaves....'* (ll 92-97).

Later, when the monster, Grendel, has drowned in the mere-pool, a thane, 'whose head was a store-house of the storied verse...', spontaneously creates a eulogy, praising Beowulf's heroism and linking him with the legendary Sigemund (ll.867-874). King Hrothgar himself is described telling stories to the music of the harp (ll.2105-2111) and, at the end of the poem, after Beowulf's death, warriors circle his barrow on horseback, chanting a ritual dirge in his praise (ll.3169-3182) (Alexander 1973, op.cit.).

Despite their small numbers and consequent closeness, tribes recognised social distinctions. *Beowulf* celebrates the deeds of members of the powerful elite, the warrior heroes close to the king. (There are only two mentions of non-aristocratic individuals in the whole poem: a man who steals a cup from the treasure hoard and an unnamed woman who sings a lament for the dead Beowulf.) The several individuals who take on the role of storyteller, like the heroes they sing of, are all members of the aristocracy. Thus we see that those who were politically powerful were the ones whose stories were



dignified in literary form to be performed again and again, over centuries (Chadwick & Chadwick, 1932).

The poem draws upon several sets of sagas and poems and includes mythical elements such as the superhuman powers of the hero who kills three monsters. The triple repetition is characteristic of folktale and the action which takes place in Denmark conforms to a folktale known as 'The Bear's Son Tale'; the fights with the monsters also include magical elements typical of ritual and fairytale (Alexander, 1973, op.cit.). Clearly, fairytales were known to and used by those who composed and told the poem in the 8th century and earlier.

## 2. Defining the oral tradition

Once systematic collection and recording of traditional oral tales had begun, in the early 19th century, three main categories: folktales, myths and legends, were distinguished by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. These categories are now generally accepted by modern folklorists. The tripartite division is based on the formal features of a tale, the attitude to time expressed in it and the kind of belief it is accorded.

- *Folktales* are narratives whose fictional nature is marked by conventional opening and closing formulas, which frame the tale and indicate that what is said is not to be taken as truth. 'Once upon a time..' and '...they lived happily ever after' are common examples of this in Europe. Folktales take place in settings which are timeless and placeless. They usually recount the adventures of human or animal characters;

- *Myths* do not have special opening and closing formulas; they are considered to be truthful and are accepted on faith. They are taught to be believed and are cited as authority; they are the embodiment of dogma, usually sacred, often associated with theology and ritual. They are set in an earlier world than that of the telling-before historical time- and they account for the creation of the world as we know it. Their main characters are not usually human but deities, culture heroes and animals;
- *Legends*, like myths, are regarded as true by their narrators; they are set in a historical period less remote than 'mythical time' and concern the deeds of heroes who are often aristocratic. They are more often secular than sacred; there is frequently no closure in legends (Dundas, 1965).

Folktales typically exist in numerous variants; for example, 345 variants of the Cinderella story were identified by Marian Cox (1893). Taken together, the variants convey the multifariousness and ambiguity of experience. The striking contradictions between variants are matched by their similarities: elements which appear in one tale re-appear in others from different places and times (Cook, 1969; Calasso, 1988). The motif of the animal which is killed, eaten and then brought back to life when its bones are re-assembled in its skin, occurs in variants of 'Cinderella' from Scotland and India and in a Norse myth about the god, Thor. The endless interconnections between traditional tales have been most satisfactorily expressed through metaphor by modern novelists who refer to 'the tree of tales', 'the cauldron of story' (Tolkien 1947: 23, 29) or 'the sea of stories' (Rushdie 1992). Such images of organic creations, where one element

blends with, or grows out of, another effectively reveal the essential nature of the tales and the inherent difficulty of categorising them.

## 2.1 The fairytale

One particular kind of folktale is the focus of this account: the magic folktale, also known as the fairytale or wondertale. In what follows, I use the term fairytale which suggests enchantment (though there are very often no fairies in these stories) because it is now the most widely used term in English (Carter, 1990) and the least clumsy. The defining features of the fairytale are: magical transformation, as when a hedgehog becomes a handsome young man after a princess has taken him into her bed and the presence of wonders, such as talking animals, glass mountains, hands which move through the air alone, endlessly overflowing porridge pots. They also provoke wonder in those who hear or read them, both in the receptive sense of marvelling at their contents and in the active sense of considering new possibilities; like dreams, they offer new ways of thinking about and constructing the world. The characters in fairytales are limited to a small number of stereotypes whose behaviour is usually predictable and whose moral status is directly linked to their social standing: a poor widow or the third son of the king, is more likely to be morally worthy than someone who is higher up in the social hierarchy. Although the events in a fairytale are often illogical, the logic of the emotions in them is usually maintained: those who have been ill-treated or neglected eventually find love and prosper, while those who have been cruel or greedy are punished. Fairytales provide ways of imagining what might happen in life and suggest ways of dealing with it; they usually end optimistically. Since they are unrealistic, they can be appreciated by many

different people at many different times, including children (Warlow, 1977 op. cit.; Warner, 1994).

## 2.2 Fairytale and fantasy

Magical thought or fantasy, is a permanent activity of the mind which deals primarily in images, although it may use language, and is a way people improvise upon their representations of the world in accordance with their own desires or fears (Britton, 1977; Smith, 1992). Fantasy is entirely solipsistic and has no practical efficiency in the world beyond the self. It can be distinguished from imagination, which is a way of reflecting upon the world and one's relations with others and is essential to efficient social functioning. Some fairytales, like medieval romances, have magical plots which are products of fantasy, structured as a sequence of images; they make whatever the teller wants to happen seem to happen. For example: family conflicts are resolved. They adopt a single point of view, that of the hero, which coincides with that of the narrator. Listeners, recognising fantasy when they hear it, tend to adopt this point of view as their own and experience the tale as if they were telling it themselves. Magical fantasies can be clearly distinguished from fantasies contrived by imagination (e.g. trickster tales), because they create discernible and characteristic story structures similar to those uncovered in Russian fairytales by Propp (1958) who treated his collection as structured works of art, not as psychological products. Propp found an invariable pattern: misfortune of the hero; struggles, leading eventually to victory for the protagonist, often with magical help from a donor, and consequences which lead to victory for the protagonist and to his/her being subsequently recognised as triumphant and splendid. (Wilson, 1983).

### 2.3 Fairytale and myth

In *Historical Roots of the Wondertale* (1946), published in the West in 1984, Propp, attempted to prove that the structure of the fairytale is traceable to totemic initiation and funeral rites. He suggested that motifs found in the Russian fairytales, such as : 'children led into the forest and abandoned', 'the hut in the forest', 'the hero beaten by a witch', 'hacking to pieces and resuscitation', were connected with initiation rituals. Such rituals include the representation of death followed by birth into a new stage of life. He proposed that, at first, the tale was an explanation of the significance of the initiation ritual and later became separated from the ritual context. This separation could have resulted from changes in the social organisation of the tribe such as forced re-settlement or conversion to Christianity. Once separated from ritual, the tale could be worked upon artistically (Propp 1946/1984, op.cit.).

For Mircea Eliade, the historian of myth and religion, myths telling of the beginnings of the world and the deeds of the gods in primordial time, embodied the religion of tribal society. They set examples for mortals to follow in their own lives and provided a cohesive social force. Eliade accepted Propp's idea that fairytales continued initiation rituals on the level of the imaginary; he thought they telescoped numerous memories of different stages of cultural development, creating '*structures of exemplary behaviour*'. Whilst fairytales also shared the structures and motifs of myths, their characters were ordinary people without gods but with human or animal companions/ helpers/ protectors who drew on magical powers to help them. Eliade saw fairytales as camouflaged myths, profane conveyors

of the cohesive religious experience. He speculated that myths and fairytales could have co-existed very early in tribal society, the fairytale being '*an easy doublet*' for the initiation myth and rite. He insisted that the need for ritual initiation is an enduring part of the human condition and that it is for this reason that fairytales continue to play an important role in modern society (Eliade, 1963: 201-202).

## 2.4 Discussion

Taking a historical view of fairytales is problematic because we can only make guesses about the purely oral tradition within which they originated; where oral tales have been collected and recorded, they have not usually, until this century, been dated and details of tellers and the circumstances of telling have not usually been noted. Even where such details are known, the tale texts, which blend material from a variety of sources and tellers, are very difficult to analyse because they are symbolic representations, multi-layered works of verbal art. They are unlikely to reflect the world in which they were created in a direct way.

Despite all of this, there are some certainties. Paradoxically, we know that the tales have had oral currency for many centuries mainly because, since the introduction of writing, they have passed from speech to writing and back to speech innumerable times (Zipes 1988; Warner 1994 op.cit.). Through *written* forms of narrative verbal art, then, the history of the fairytale can be traced up to the present. Sometimes, there is just a passing reference on a written surface, sometimes the skeleton of a tale can be sensed below the surface of a work and sometimes a tale is completely re-worked in written form. We can say that what has remained constant is the

human need for fantasy and for shared socialising representations which provide a sense of collective identity, a set of patterned words, thoughts and feelings, through which people can contemplate, compare and re-assess their lives.

### 3. The period of manuscript culture (1000-1500)

#### 3.1 Before 1066

Early manuscript literacy in England was largely a church monopoly; the clergy had a professional need to be literate but the majority of the population had no pragmatic need for literacy in their social or working lives (Levine 1986). *Beowulf* shows very clearly how works of verbal art express, however indirectly, the belief systems of the societies in which they are composed. Its content-the stories- is rooted in the pagan past but it was composed in writing by a Christian poet, for an audience who also listened to sermons. This poet adds a Christian gloss to the events of the poem, as in:

*'the Maker was unknown to them,  
the judge of all actions, the Almighty was unheard of,  
they knew not how to praise the Prince of Heaven,  
the Wielder of Glory.'* (ll. 180-183)

After Beowulf's death, the loyal thane, Wiglaf, berates his fellows for their cowardice in deserting Beowulf and reminds them that they have not honoured the mutual obligations between a thane and his lord. This ending links the poem with other Anglo-Saxon verse lamenting the transitoriness of the world (Alexander 1973, op.cit.). It implies that paganism was

superseded by Christianity because its values were defective. We may assume that *Beowulf* was preserved by the church despite its pagan roots because it was seen as a prestigious part of the people's cultural heritage.

### 3.2 1066-1500

This period begins with the Norman conquest and ends with the death of Geoffrey Chaucer. First, I describe the new structures of power and ideology and the linguistic changes which followed the Norman Conquest. Then, I indicate how, whilst the old oral ways of conducting life remained full of vitality, familiarity with documents spread through the population after the conquest. I show how the church monopoly of tuition restricted the development of literacy and yet how practical literacy developed in legal and mercantile contexts. Finally, I describe the kinds of stories which were current: fairytales, fables, exempla and romances and the status each kind enjoyed. I relate Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1387) to these different kinds.

#### 3.2.1 Structures of power and ideology

After the Norman victory of 1066, a hierarchical feudal state was rapidly established. The king, as sole land owner, granted land to members of the nobility in return for dues and military service; in this way, he ensured his own supremacy. The nobles in their turn situated others below them in the hierarchy. Lowest of all were the villeins, who worked their own small-holdings, and the cottars or serfs who had to work on their lord's land as well as on their own strips. The hierarchy of the Christian church, ruled by the bishops with poor parish priests at the lowest level, paralleled this secular hierarchy. A fixed hierarchical ordering was assumed in all spheres of life.



As the king was head of the nation, so God was head of the church, a father was head of his family and a master craftsman ruled his journeymen and apprentices. Theoretically at least, everyone knew his or her place, women being universally considered inferior to men. The relationship of 'service' to a superior was considered to be the equivalent of love; in return, there was an obligation upon those in superior positions to care for inferiors.

In the verbal art of the period, the supernatural is constantly referred to, whether in forms sanctioned by the Christian church or in magical beliefs of pagan origin enshrined, for example, in folk tales. Since human life, especially for the least powerful, was laborious, beset with risks of famine and disease and usually short, the need for supernatural support must have been keenly felt. Suffering was endemic: throughout Europe, only one child in five survived early childhood and many women died young, through constant child-bearing. Although the population of England had grown to approximately three million by the middle of the 14th century, a quarter of this number are thought to have died during The Black Death of 1348-9 (Brewer,1982).

### 3.2.2 Linguistic changes

Before the conquest, Latin was the language of church worship and the lingua franca of international communication. After 1066, a third language, Norman French, was added to Latin and the spoken dialects of the indigenous population; this now became the language of the court and the new aristocracy. It was also used for legal communication, in competition with Latin, which remained the official language of the church, of church affairs and of historical chronicles. Effective written composition in

English, including verbal art, ceased soon after the Conquest. This break in the English manuscript tradition underlines the connection between writing and political power. The verbal art of socially inferior groups had never been deliberately put into writing and now the inferior groups included the displaced English aristocracy (Pattison 1983, op.cit.; Meek, 1991).

England was now in contact with several European cultures: German and Flemish as well as Norman. Soldiers, camp followers, minstrels, traders now entered England in increasing numbers, mixing freely with the indigenous population at all social levels; we can imagine the children of Norman knights acquiring English from their English mothers or nurses. By the middle of the 12th century, there is evidence of the blending of residual Old English with the new social and linguistic influences and, by the second half of the 14th century, 'Middle English' had fully evolved. The London-Essex dialect, in which Chaucer wrote, had been promoted to the position of a written standard, at any rate in the south of the country (Brewer, 1982 op.cit.; Levine 1986, op.cit.). Up to the first quarter of the 14th century, Norman French remained important in the lives of the aristocracy but it became gradually less and less a native possession, more and more a special accomplishment. By the third quarter of the 14th century, it was falling out of use. It became a provincial dialect of French, losing prestige by comparison with the French spoken in Paris. Chaucer's disparagement of Madame Eglentyne's '*French of Stratford-Atte-Bowe*' is evidence of this (General Prologue, *Canterbury Tales* ll.123-6). By the end of the 14th century, the English nobility were talking Middle English. Similar changes were taking place in the use of Latin, but it took much longer for the clergy to dispense with it. Latin represented an important part of the sacred mystery of the clergy. After the fourth Lateran Council at Rome in 1215,

educational and religious tracts were produced in English and, in sermons, passages from the bible were translated into English. Legal dealings were increasingly carried out in English. Most text books and documents, however, remained in Latin or French long after the close of the Middle Ages (Brewer, 1982 op.cit.).

### 3.2.3 The development of literacy

After the Norman Conquest, King William established a centralized bureaucracy to gain political control of the country; as a result, over the following two centuries, the use of written records slowly permeated the whole of society. There was an enormous increase in the number of documents created. (About 2,000 documents survive from the whole pre-Conquest era but *tens* of thousands from the period 1066-1307.) Literate practices had become familiar across the social spectrum in most parts of the country by 1307. For example: in 1248, vagrants, who were lowest of all in the social order, were expected to carry with them written testimonials to their trustworthiness and, in 1300, even serfs were conveying property to their heirs by means of charters, in imitation of their social superiors. Increasing familiarity with documents did not mean increased access to literacy learning among the mass of the population; education was monopolised by the clergy and reading and writing remained restricted throughout the Medieval period; their density was generally low in the population as a whole (Clanchy, 1979; Levine, 1986 op.cit.).

During the period, there was a shift in the main institutional setting of literacy from the administration of government to the church. Churchmen were the majority of those who could read. The terms 'clericus' (from the

Greek, meaning 'one of the chosen') and 'litteratus' (from the Latin, meaning 'educated') had become synonymous, so that there was a tendency for people to think in terms of a completely literate clergy and a completely illiterate laity, even though the reality was much less clear cut. The institution known as 'benefit of clergy' reinforced such beliefs. A lay person could be tried in an ecclesiastical rather than a civil court if he could prove his 'clerkship' by reading a passage from the bible in Latin known as the 'neck-verse'. The incentive to learn to read was that ecclesiastical courts imposed much lighter penalties than civil courts and Bishops' prisons were much less secure than their civil counterparts (Levine, 1986 op.cit.).

By the 14th century practical literacy was developing amongst certain groups of the population although most people were still involved in work which did not require them to be literate. Being able to read and write came to be seen as necessary by members of the nobility and gentry, since they were increasingly involved in transactions which included written records. Merchants, legal specialists and prosperous craftsmen in the towns were also becoming literate for similar reasons. The evidence of contemporary wills shows that men from these strata owned libraries, some of which included works of literature. Possibly their ownership of books was a sign of their desire to better themselves socially (Levine, 1986 op.cit.). It is also probable that from the 13th and 14th centuries, people began to attach a negative connotation to illiteracy (Cipolla, 1969).

### 3.2.4 Literacy Tuition

Most formal instruction in reading and writing was entirely in the hands of the church until the Reformation in the 1520s. At first, the teachers were all

clerics and their aim was to train entrants to Holy Orders who had to be literate in order to be able to conduct church services. The curriculum in these schools was Latin dominated and the materials used were all of a religious nature. The church engaged in education purely to service itself; there was no commitment to mass education in the vernacular. From the 13th century onwards, some secular teachers were employed in the schools and the curriculum evolved a little away from preparation for the Christian life. Towards the end of the period there was also some increase in the provision of education financed by bequests from wealthy citizens, originally given to pay for priests to conduct masses. They established Petty Schools which gave basic education and Grammar Schools for more advanced work, where the object was to familiarise the pupils with Latin language and literature. Practical and occupational literacy were not taught at these schools although there were some 'business schools' set up, from the 13th century onwards, to teach those literate practices necessary for commerce. There is evidence that reading and writing began to be taught informally outside the schools (Levine 1986, op.cit.).

### 3.2.5 The continuing vitality of the oral culture

The increase in the number of documents and the spread of practical literacy did not transform people's lives rapidly, for a vital oral culture was still in existence. Telling and listening to stories was common at all social levels; the *Gesta Romanorum* (late 13th century), Chaucer (1387) and Peele (1595), provide glimpses. Perhaps the most touching example is in *The Winter's Tale*; when Prince Mamilius is asked to tell a story to the ladies of the court, he offers to draw upon his repertoire: '*A sad tale's best for winter. I have one of sprites and goblins...*' (Shakespeare 1611, Act I, sc.2.). Oral

ways of assisting the memory were still very much in evidence: storytellers continued to use repetition, formulaic language and the rule of three; 'The Battle of Maldon', composed in the year 1000, used Anglo-Saxon mnemonic devices and poetic diction was used in literary composition throughout the medieval period (Levine, 1986 op.cit.). When people needed spiritual reassurance or advice, in times of loss or unhappiness, they could turn to old traditions using oral modes: cunning folk provided herbal remedies in times of sickness and childbirth; witches could ward off the evil eye or put a curse on one's enemies (Thomas, 1978). As far as the majority of lay people were concerned, the church, too, operated entirely by word of mouth; parish priests and, in the 13th century, Franciscan friars, preached in English; lay access to the bible was forbidden. Reading at this time meant reading aloud; the oral delivery of written text was normal practice, just as it had been in the days of the Venerable Bede or King Alfred (Crosby, 1936). Silent reading was extremely unusual, partly because it excluded interested readers and partly because it requires a high level of fluency and an easily legible text. Reading and writing would have been acquired separately and would not necessarily have been seen as connected. 'Writing', in the sense of composing a text, would have suggested a verbal skill based on dictation, with its roots in the discipline of rhetoric, while 'writing', in the sense of inscription, was the province of the professional scribe (Levine, 1986, op.cit.).

#### 4. The kinds of stories found in manuscripts

##### 4.1 The fairytale

There are no surviving copies of complete fairytales in English from this period, although the references in works by Elizabethan writers show that they must have continued to be told (Briggs 1959, 1970). The fact that they were not put into vernacular written form at this time suggests that their main carriers must have been powerless groups, native speakers of the dialects of Old English after the Conquest, those who were the least likely to be able to read and therefore most dependent on oral story-telling. Since fairytales included pagan magic beliefs and did not include Christian morals, they would not have met with the approval of church authorities who controlled both communication technology and literacy tuition. This view is confirmed by the ironic opening lines of Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath's Tale':

*'When good King Arthur ruled in ancient days.....*

*This was a land brim full of fairy folk*

*The Elf-Queen and her courtiers joined and broke*

*Their elfin dance on many a green mead...*

*But no one now sees fairies any more*

*For now the saintly charity and prayer*

*Of holy friars seem to have purged the air.'*

(Chaucer, 1387, Tr. Coghill, 1951).

Fairytale motifs and references appear in some of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and in disguised form elsewhere, e.g. as 'history' written in Latin (see Chapter Three below).

## 4.2 The Fable and the Exemplum

Fables are stories about human characters personified as animals, usually with explicit morals attached; exempla differ from them only in that they include supernatural elements and the moral is often pointed with a miracle. Greek and Arabian fables appeared in England in Latin manuscript translations in the 15th century: *Aesop's Fables* from Graeco-Roman sources and *The Fables of Alphonse*, from Arabic sources. Priests used fables and exempla in sermons to induce their congregations to pay attention and so retain the moral messages they wanted to convey (Ranelagh, 1979). In schools, Aesop was used with similar intentions in teaching Latin and Greek and reading and writing in English (Darton, 1982).

The widespread familiarity of fables in the Middle Ages can be deduced from the fact that, until the publication of the authorised version of the Bible in 1611, they were frequently quoted in government council chambers and sometimes in written reports (Briggs 1970, op.cit.). They passed into common speech, as phrases such as 'dog in the manger' and 'sour grapes', still remind us. Oral versions of fables and exempla have been collected in country districts in England within the last 100 years. For example, 'The Tale of the Hare and the Prickly-backed Urchin', a version of Aesop's 'The Hare and the Tortoise', set in the Yorkshire countryside (Cowling, 1915, quoted in Briggs, 1970, op.cit.). The following exemplum, 'The Greedy Peasant Woman', was collected in Berkshire in the 19th century:

*'Our Lord went to a baker's shop to ask for something to eat and the woman there began making him a cake. But, each time she put some flour into the pan, she took some out, saying, 'Oo- oo-oh, that's too much', and he said to*



*her, 'Owl thou art and owl thou shalt be, and all the birds of earth shall peck at thee.'* (Briggs 1970, op.cit. ).

This is clearly a very old story, for it is referred to in *Hamlet* Act IV, sc. 5: *'They say the owl was a baker's daughter'* (Shakespeare, 1601).

Unlike fairytales, fables and exempla were put into manuscript form, usually to be used by the clergy. Their use with a largely non-literate population can be construed as a form of literary socialization of the population, carried out by the church. Although the makebelieve in such tales often derived from originally pagan sources, with Christian morals attached they could safely be used didactically by the clergy. The powerful polyvalent symbols of fairytales, may have been thought dangerous to religious orthodoxy .

#### 4.3 Romances

In France, during the 150 years which followed the Norman Conquest of England, the old Chansons de Geste emphasising military heroism, had been superseded by new lyrics and then by Romances, stories imbued with the doctrine of courtly love. The content of the Romances was drawn from many sources: 'the matter of France' (stories about Charlemagne), 'the matter of Britain' (stories about King Arthur) and 'the matter of Rome the Great' (stories about anything known of classical antiquity). By the beginning of the 13th century, French literature dominated the whole of Christendom; stories imported from Wales, Brittany, Greece and the Orient, were given French form and taken on by minstrels travelling to other countries. England played a large part in this trade, perhaps because, at this time, many people in England were bi-lingual or tri-lingual. (e.g. Gower; Marie de France.) In England, manuscript copies of Romances dating from the 13th century up to

the end of the mediaeval period have survived. They were formed from all three 'matters' and from other materials such as earlier northern European history and stories of oriental origin. Although they vary in subject matter, form and quality, the Romances share certain features: they tend to reflect the values of court circles, their authors, like those of the fairytales, are anonymous, they describe a Utopian society in which there is a sense of universal Christendom pitted against the powers of darkness, they show a passion for colour, pageantry, marvels and mystery and they exist in a world of abstractions without the problems of ordinary human existence (Sampson 1970; Fowler, 1989).

Many romances can be shown to contain magical plots, similar to those found in fairytales (Wilson, 1988). We can therefore assume that they fulfilled a solipsistic purpose for those who composed or listened to them similar to that of fairytales, but at a more elevated social level. Despite their similarities to fairytales, many manuscript copies were made and circulated; perhaps, since they were favoured by the powerful and, in any case, contained Christian morals, they were considered safe.

#### 4.4 Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1387)

*The Canterbury Tales* is a compendium of fourteenth century literary genres: romance ('The Knight's Tale'), anti-clerical farcical folktale ('The Miller's Tale' and 'The Reeve's Tale'), miraculous legend ('The Prioress's Tale') beast fable ('Nun's Priest's Tale'), sermon ('The Pardoner's Tale' and 'The Parson's Tale'). 'The Wife of Bath's Tale', which tells the story of the marriage of Sir Gawain and the loathly lady, has been traced to folktale sources; it also has romance analogues (Fowler, 1989,op.cit.). All of these

genres were shaped by the fact that they were written to be read aloud. They used a variety of poetic forms and, at the level of text, 'entrelacement', the interlacing of different themes and adventures, framing, using one story as a container for several others and allegory, where the surface meaning of a whole story stands for an abstract meaning, usually of a Christian nature. Realism, totally absent from the romances, became a feature of sermons in the 14th century when biblical scenes were 'feudalized', the better to convince congregations of biblical truths (Owst 1961).

Written towards the end of the 14th century, *The Canterbury Tales* shows that Chaucer took a critical approach to these traditions. He favoured single action romance, as in 'The Knight's Tale', and satirised 'entrelacement' in 'The Tale of Sir Topas'. He uses the story of the pilgrimage to Canterbury as a frame for the stories the pilgrims tell; his use of this device has been shown to symbolize the journey of life: a use of allegory. Realism creeps into several of the tales, notably into 'The Miller's Tale' and 'The Reeve's Tale'. Chaucer wrote in the London-Essex dialect of Middle English, spoken by the people he lived amongst but he also used the conventions of the courtly French tradition: smooth metre and heroic couplets rather than the alliterative verse tradition of the Anglo-Saxons.

The vision of the work, unfinished when Chaucer, died, provides an ironic view of the whole of contemporary society; this fact as well as the language, diction and genres used implies an audience which included people of different ranks, from country as well as city and church and including the new bourgeoisie of the towns (Fowler, 1989 op.cit.). The ironic flavour suggests that, as an educated government official, who had travelled and lived abroad, Chaucer was able to distance himself from his material and be

more critical of the society he inhabited than the scop of earlier times who was closely identified with his king and had to face his audience and project his composition at the point of creation. *The Canterbury Tales* survives in multiple manuscript copies, a sure indication of its popularity during his time (Meek, 1991, op.cit.).

#### 4.5 Discussion

The oral tradition has now been the subject of folkloric research for the best part of two hundred years and the major categories of myth, legend and folktale, identified and defined by the brothers Grimm are still in use today. Towards the end of the 19th century, when large collections of tales were accumulating, folklorists began devising typologies and indices so that they could carry out more detailed classification and cataloguing. The most refined and monumental of these systems was that of the Finnish school (Aarne, 1928, revised Thompson, 1961). This system combined a catalogue of tale-types and an index of folktale motifs; using these aids, the past of a tale text could be traced, both historically and geographically. The intention was, by constructing a tale's 'life history', to arrive at its ultimate archetype or 'Ur-story' (Dundes, 1965 op.cit.).

The theory of discoverable Ur-forms remains hypothetical (Eliade, 1963, op.cit.) and the pre-occupation of some modern folklorists with the historic-geographic approach may have led them to ignore the performance features of modern instances of oral storytelling (Finnegan, 1988, op.cit.) or to obscure the connections of tales with their wider socio-cultural contexts (Warner, 1994, op.cit.). Nevertheless, the Aarne-Thompson typology and indices are still widely used as research tools today. We are all indebted to

the folklorists because it is through their work that we are enabled to see that there is a continuous oral tradition with variant appearances.

## 5. The period of early print culture (1500 -1800)

This period can be thought of as a transition between the medieval and modern worlds, between manuscript culture and mass print culture. During the 15th century, the feudal aristocracy, which had held its own against the central power of the king, began to lose political and economic importance and to be replaced by the new prosperous bourgeois class, which allied itself with the monarchy. Over the subsequent three hundred years, the ideological dominance of Christianity eventually diminished and the influence of new scientific thinking increased (Russell, 1961). Gradually, a process of cultural splitting took place in society whilst, at the same time, print culture became established. I now trace these developments and the fortunes of the oral tradition in relation to them.

### 5.1 The process of cultural splitting

Peter Burke describes Western European culture of this period as consisting of 'The Great Tradition' of the minority and 'The Little Tradition' of the majority. The Great Tradition includes classical learning, medieval scholastic philosophy and theology (which were still alive) and intellectual movements which directly affected only the educated minority: the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century and the Enlightenment of the 18th century. This kind of culture was in Latin and was transmitted through the schools and universities attended exclusively by boys and men of higher social classes. The Little Tradition is the vernacular

culture of village communities where few could read; it included the oral tradition of storytelling, folksong, seasonal festivals and some printed texts such as broadsides, almanacs and chapbooks.

In the 16th and early 17th centuries, members of the upper classes took part in the oral vernacular culture of the Little Tradition; at the outset, at least, there were many of them who were not literate. The lower classes, on the other hand, were never able to share directly in the Great Tradition because most of them knew no Latin. (As we know, Shakespeare was reputed to have 'small Latin and less Greek' (Jonson, 1623)). Communication between the two Traditions was facilitated by a variety of 'cultural mediators'; these included minstrels who performed the old songs and stories at fairs and markets, travelling pedlars, like Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*, who sold cheap printed texts amongst other things, upper class women who were socially part of the elite but excluded from formal education in Latin and peasant nurses employed to look after the young children of the nobility. During the period, communication between the two traditions weakened and, by 1800, a deep cultural separation had developed between them (Burke, 1978).

## 5.2 Print culture: an extension of manuscript culture

Just as writing had percolated through society over a lengthy period, so printing slowly became part of the social fabric. In the first instance, it was an elaboration and extension of manuscript culture rather than a radical departure from it. Before William Caxton set up his printing press in Westminster in 1476, the production of manuscript books in monastic scriptoria was a flourishing industry in several European cities. Since the

hours when monks were allowed to work as scribes were restricted, scriptoria found it difficult to meet the constantly increasing demand for accurately copied documents. Consequently, secular stationers set themselves up in towns to provide a paid service for law courts and universities. Thus, an organisational framework for commercial publishing was already in existence when the new technology arrived. Incunabula mimicked manuscript books in appearance and the earliest were reproductions of texts already popular in manuscript form, such as the works of Aesop and Chaucer (Levine 1986, op. cit.). Print was an attractive proposition commercially, not only because copies could be produced with greater speed and accuracy but also because less manpower was needed. In 1500, one printer could serve 20 clerks producing original material, whereas in 1450, ten copyists had been needed for each clerk (Eisenstein, 1968).

### 5.3 The development of literacy

There was now a much stronger motivation for almost everyone to learn to read. The main audience for print was the Christian public. Tyndale's and Coverdale's translations of the Bible into the vernacular (1525-1526; 1537) were the result of post-Lutheran moves to Reformation of the church. Unlike Catholic priests who disapproved of the majority of lay people reading Scriptures, the Reformers were very keen to make them directly accessible. The poor wanted to read the Bible for themselves because they knew it referred to them as the children of God and promised them the same heaven as the rich. Printed ephemera such as handbills and bulletins, broadsheets and calendars, began to circulate, so it is likely that, seeing print more frequently, people became more aware of its uses and of a need to be literate. An increasing number of people higher up the social scale wanted

to have their children learn how to keep accounts and there was a need for lay administrators and professional men, such as lawyers (Stone, 1964). Secular education developed during the 16th century with Petty Schools and Grammar Schools being endowed in increasing numbers. The bulk of the population, the poorest people, acquired some basic education at Petty Schools. The lower forms of Grammar Schools provided literacy teaching for boys going into apprenticeships, the upper forms, a classical education for the sons of the gentry and middle sections of the urban population, to fit them for entry to the universities, which now admitted some laymen. Schooling was still restricted geographically and socially and informal literacy tuition took place within many families or at local dame-schools, the instructors usually being women. Writing was probably less widespread than reading (Spufford, 1979). Historical research into literacy levels during the Elizabethan and Stuart periods based on the signing of documents shows that literacy closely reflected social rank. Together with labourers, the very lowest rates are shown by women of all social levels, their widespread illiteracy being in keeping with 17th century attitudes to women's domestic and spiritual inferiority (Levine, 1986 Op.cit.).

During the period of the English Revolution (1640-1660), there was a development of embryonic mass literacy, assisted by freedom from censorship and centralised control of publication. There was an unprecedented explosion of written polemic and propaganda, many pamphleteers adopting a plain conversational style prose, appropriate to a mass readership containing many novice readers. These developments politicised literacy because they demonstrated that the written word carried an enormous potential for political persuasion and some of the puritan publications contained demands for universal, free, compulsory education as



the main foundation of a reformed Commonwealth (Stone 1969). The period of free political comment and publishing came to an abrupt end in 1660, with the restoration of the monarchy; comprehensive censorship returned. The propertied and powerful classes came, from this point, to see the education of the lower orders as dangerous and corrupting. The assumption that a person's rank determined his or her literacy attainments gained general acceptance (Levine , 1986, op.cit.).

John Bunyan, the son of a tinker who was obliged to travel to feed his family was one of those who counted himself lucky to have been taught to read '*...notwithstanding the meanness of my parents..*' (Quoted in Levine, 1986, op.cit.: 81). His religious allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678/1684) is a quest story related to the secular romances such as 'Bevis of Hampton', that he knew from childhood; it develops characters well beyond the demands of the allegory, includes humour and uses both colloquial language and the language of the Bible. This work was enormously popular in Bunyan's lifetime and has been constantly republished since. For the first hundred years after it was published, it circulated exclusively amongst the newly literate members of the lower classes (Carpenter & Prichard, 1984).

#### 5.4 New developments in print publishing

The increase in literacy amongst the poorer classes clearly provided commercial opportunities for publishers. In the early 16th century, the first cheap books ('chapbooks') were printed. They consisted of 16 or 24 small pages, stitched together in paper covers; they contained shortened versions of ballads, romances and popular tales from the oral tradition, such as 'Jack the Giant Killer' and 'Tom Hickathrift', with rough woodcut illustrations.

There was a marked increase in their production after the relaxation of state censorship in 1641; *Pilgrim's Progress* appeared in abridged chapbook form ( 1678/1684,op.cit. ). Chapbooks were the only imaginative reading matter accessible to the poorest people until the late 18th century (Carpenter & Prichard, 1984, op.cit.).

### 5.5 The cultural divide widens

From the mid 17th century, the English upper classes had withdrawn more and more from popular culture so that, by the end of the period, there was a clear separation between the Great and Little Traditions. Wives of the nobility, who had formerly acted as cultural mediators, now began to be educated and so joined their husbands in the Great Tradition. A symptom of the widening cultural gap in society during this period was the fact that members of the elite with antiquarian interests such as Browne (1646), Aubrey (1687), now began to collect folklore and tales from the oral tradition out of intellectual curiosity; they no longer listened to such stories for entertainment. By the end of the 18th century, in Britain as in most parts of Europe, the clergy, nobility, merchants, professional men - and their wives - had abandoned popular culture to the lower classes, from whom they were now separated by profound differences in world view (Burke 1978, op.cit.).

### 5.6 The Enlightenment

The 18th century in Europe was deeply imbued with belief in the '*progress of human knowledge, rationality, wealth, civilization and control over nature...*' This 'Enlightenment' drew its strength primarily from the evident

progress of production, trade and the economic and scientific rationality believed to be associated inevitably with both. Its greatest champions were those most directly involved with this progress, the educated middle classes (Hobsbawm, 1962: 34). As the scientific view of the world became increasingly influential and more widely dispersed, pre-empirical modes of thought such as oral storytelling and, particularly, tales of fantasy were increasingly seen, by members of the middle and upper classes in England, as the preserve of the uneducated and therefore non-rational: children and 'childish' adults (the lower classes).

#### 5.7 The oral tradition during the 18th century

Traditionally, the storyteller's audience was composed of people of all ages and, in the 18th century, this must have remained true in village communities. Now, as the Little and Great Traditions became more and more separate, nursemaids and servants in the homes of the wealthy became the last cultural mediators between them; their audiences would usually be the children in their charge whom they needed to entertain or pacify.

John Locke, whose educational theories were highly influential in 18th century England, acknowledged the value of story in the form of fables like Aesop's in 'cozening' children to learn to read and write and behave well but he considered fairytales to be a form of mental pollution which children should be protected from. He warned parents against allowing servants to frighten their children with '*Notions of Spirits and Goblins...RawHead and BloodyBones..*' Such ideas might make a child afraid of darkness and shadows for life and turn him against religion (Locke, 1693; quoted in Summerfield, 1984, op.cit.) This view seems to have been widely accepted

among the upper classes. The fourth Earl of Chesterfield, in letters to his son and godson, expressed his strong objections to both romances and fairytales as reading matter for the young (1740, quoted in Darton, 1982, op.cit.). An anonymous publication of 1734 reads: '*Enchantment proceeds from nothing but the chit-chat of an old nurse, or the Maggots in a Madman's brain*' (Quoted in Summerfield, 1984: ix, op.cit.)

Despite the strong views of powerful adults, at least some children from 'polite society' did get to know fairytales. Chapbooks were not at first intended for them but it is likely that they would have heard them read aloud. Steele describes his eight year old godson's enjoyment of the romance of Guy of Warwick and the tale of Tom Hickathrift, among others; both were published in chapbooks. The child's sister '*dealt chiefly in fairies and sprights*', gleaned presumably from oral tellings by her nurse or governess (The Tatler no.95, Nov.15-17 1709, quoted in Darton 1982, op. cit.: 33).

## 5.8 The literary fairytale

Early in the 18th century translations from the French of *Les Mille et une Nuits* (Galland, 1704-1717) *Contes et Histoires du Temps Passé* (Perrault, Tr. Samber, 1729) were published in England. Perrault and other aristocratic French writers associated with the court did what had never been attempted in England, taking stories from the oral tradition, which they knew from childhood and re-creating them as a literary genre. In this way they bridged the cultural gap between Little and Great Traditions in their own country. In England, both books ran to several editions through the century although fairytales generally were not accepted as respectable written literature for children until the middle of the 19th century. However, both books soon

appeared in shortened chapbook versions in England (Carpenter & Prichard, 1984, op.cit.). This move constituted a bridging of the cultural gap in the reverse direction from that in France.

## 5.9 Discussion

The importance of literacy during the first half of this period should not be overestimated. Most daily transactions could still be accomplished without recourse to reading and writing, the amount of printed ephemera that most people were likely to see was very restricted and books were too expensive for the majority of the population to buy. It is noticeable that the most common print publications for the new readers were extensions of the oral culture. Almanacs, cheap collections of miscellaneous information, complemented knowledge acquired in the oral mode and chapbooks offered stories their readers already knew from oral tellings. In the chapbook, whole fairytales from the oral tradition at last attained written form. However, the cramped format of the chapbook and the need to accommodate woodcut illustrations as well as text, meant that tales were seriously shortened, if not mutilated, to fit. We can see this if we compare chapbook texts with the written records of oral tellings collected by folklorists from country people in the 19th century (Briggs, 1970, op.cit.). Chapbook versions of the fairytales were, if anything, an impoverishment of the oral tradition rather than acts of re-creation.

## 6. The period of mass print culture (1800-1900)

In this section, I review and discuss the likely reasons for the decline of the oral story tradition and the establishment of Folklore Studies in England. I

indicate the possible connection of these developments with increasing literacy levels and the move towards universal compulsory elementary education, finally achieved in the 1870s.

### 6.1 The apparent disappearance of the oral tradition

Major developments of the Industrial Revolution (1780-1840): the construction of heavy industry, the migration of rural people to work in urban areas and the building of the railways, were accompanied by a huge and rapid increase in the population of mainland Britain. From 11 million at the end of the 18th century, the population grew to 22 million by the middle of the 19th century (Williams, 1983). The balance of English society was also changed; whereas, in 1789, England was still overwhelmingly rural, by 1851, the urban population outnumbered that of the countryside. During this period of upheaval, the ancient oral tradition of storytelling appeared to be coming to an end. It lingered longest in remote rural communities, such as those of the fenland area of East Anglia, but, from 1840 onwards, the arrival of the railways, bringing newspapers and mail, finally destroyed their isolation. Conditions in urban areas, where the hours of exhausting factory work were prolonged by artificial lighting and where many people found themselves living amongst strangers, did not favour the maintenance of the oral tradition of the past (Hobsbawm, 1962, op.cit.; Marshall, 1981; Levine, 1986, op.cit.).

### 6.2 The establishment of folklore studies

Whatever the precise reasons for the decline of the oral tradition at this time (and they are clearly complex and difficult to establish with any certainty),

the great corpus of folk tales, which must have existed everywhere in England in the Middle Ages, was now thought, by amateur antiquaries, to be in danger of disappearing completely; following the example of their 17th century predecessors and of Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), they feverishly accumulated examples of the oral culture. *Observations on Popular Antiquities* (Brand, 1813) was one such collection which led to the coining of an Anglo-Saxon term, 'folklore', by Thoms in 1846, and later to the formation of the Folk-Lore Society in 1878 (Finnegan, 1977).

The Romantic Movement formed the intellectual background against which folklore as a specialist study first began. In its literary manifestation, the chief emphasis of Romanticism, which marked a shift in sensibility across W. Europe, was upon freedom of individual self-expression. Its supporters rejected the ordered rationality of the Enlightenment as mechanical, impersonal and artificial; they favoured the emotional directness of personal experience and the boundlessness of the individual imagination (Baldick, 1991). In his Preface to *The Lyrical Ballads* (Wordsworth & Coleridge, 1801), a landmark of Romanticism, Wordsworth stressed the need for poetry to use rural plain-style language. In *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge stressed that the poet's task was to reveal the workings of the individual imagination, dissolving and uniting images into new forms (Coleridge, 1817). Both poets were strongly influenced, as writers, by their childhood experiences of the oral tradition at first hand and through chapbooks (Wordsworth, 1850). Coleridge, born in 1772 and an obsessive reader as a six year old, recalled in his forties, the impact of *The Arabian Nights* (probably in chapbook form) on himself at that age. '*...I can never forget with what a strange mixture of obscure dread and intense desire I used to look at the volume and*

*watch it, till the morning sunshine had reached and nearly covered it, when, and not before, I felt the courage given me to seize the precious treasure'* (Holmes, 1989). In his visionary *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and in the pictures he engraved for children's books, William Blake demonstrated his belief in the power of children's imagination. Such valuing of the oral tradition with its origins in communal rural life and of the imagination of common people and children, by professional writers and artists marks a radical shift in the attitudes of the intelligentsia.

### 6.3 Developments in literacy, education and publishing

The economic growth of the period was not directly related to an increase in literacy. During the first half of the 18th century, with a possible 30%-40% adult signing literacy rate, Britain had been one of the most literate societies. New and modified genres of popular literature (local newspapers, weekly reviews, chapbooks and religious tracts) had begun to appear and, at the same time, printed matter such as notices, was on the increase. As print became more familiar in the environment, we might expect literacy rates to have risen but, in the second half of the 18th century, they reached a standstill, coinciding with the initial phases of industrialisation. The manufacturing processes of the new industries did not require operatives (the bulk of the new workforce) to be literate.

During the English revolution and the period of the Restoration, literacy had acquired socio-political rather than economic importance. In the 18th century, a consensus had developed, among the middle and upper classes, that the general function of education was simply to reproduce existing social arrangements and distinctions. Those who opposed the extension of



education amongst the poor did so on the grounds that it would spread dissatisfaction and insubordination, while advocates of popular education thought that enabling the poor to study the Bible would make them less susceptible to vice; basic schooling would help to instil self control and habits of industry, order and frugality. This debate delayed the introduction of a national system of elementary education until the 1870s. During the delay, learning to read came to be seen as a form of political emancipation by many members of the new working classes and an approximation to full signing literacy (80% for men and 73% for women) was achieved before the creation of a full state school system. This position was reached by a variety of pathways. Between 1785 and 1840, the working classes can be described as separating into, on the one hand, elements that assimilated 'respectable' cultural forms in school, work and worship and, on the other hand, elements that adhered to traditions of autonomy, community solidarity and political dissent. The first of these two groups was catered for largely by schools with charity or religious foundations, which endeavoured to civilize their pupils in accordance with the values of their social superiors. The second group used corresponding societies, ale- and coffee-house reading-rooms, dame schools and various other forms of self-help, which enabled them to acquire literacy on their own terms, i.e. within the context of their oral culture. It is thought likely that literacy teaching and learning of this second sort minimised the resistance of the working classes to print (Levine 1986, op.cit.).

#### 6.4 The 19th century concept of schooled literacy for the poor

Since the Reformation, the aim of elementary education had always been for pupils to be able to read aloud from the Bible and to spell accurately from

memory before learning to write. When writing was taught, it was usually (except in certain vocational schools) a matter of learning calligraphy and taking down texts from dictation, rather than composition. Reading was always much more widely taught than writing. The curriculum and pedagogy of 19th century schools for the poor did not break with these past practices. In 1882, the codification of standards set for elementary schools included the following:

*'Standard VI:*

*Reading: A short ordinary paragraph in a newspaper, or other modern narrative ; Writing: Another short ordinary paragraph in a newspaper or other modern narrative, slowly dictated once by a few words at a time.'*  
(Midwinter, 1970: 84, quoted by Levine, 1986,op.cit.: 92).

Thus, we see that, with regard to the education of the poor, the new schools were as much a demonstration of power and control by the elite as their predecessors had been. Written composition by pupils, where there is always a chance that an individual voice or imagination may be expressed, was simply not envisaged. The association of popular publications with political unrest remained too great a threat in the minds of the school providers.

## 6.5 The fairytale in the 19th century

Despite changing attitudes towards the oral tradition, it was not until the middle of the century that the fairytale was regarded as a respectable genre of written literature for children. In the first half century, *Popular Fairytales* (Pub.Tabart, 1818) *German Popular Stories* (Grimms, 1823,Tr. Taylor), *Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales* (Halliwell, 1849) as well as the stories

of Hans Andersen (1840s) were published (Darton, 1982, op.cit.). The re-issue of *German Popular Stories* (1868) with a preface by Ruskin, defending the fairytale, marked the change. From this point on, the fairytale gained literary acceptability. Innovative fairytales began to be published by novelists such as Wilde and Macdonald. By the end of the century, although oral telling of fairytales continued in some isolated rural areas, most children who were exposed to them met them in books. These books were too expensive for the majority of the new reading public. Children's bookshops therefore remained the preserve of the middle and upper classes whose children now heard fairytales read in nursery or bedroom, no doubt enjoying the illustrations which were much more sophisticated than those of most chapbooks. Fairytales were also now produced in different versions, as opera and ballet for elite audiences and as pantomime, burlesque, and toy theatres for the enjoyment of wider sections of society, including children (Zipes, 1994).

## 6.6 Discussion

Knowing, as we do, that the oral narrative habit is a human given, it can be assumed that, during the nineteenth century, traditional storytelling continued, unrecorded, for some time, in some homes. Levine believes that informal literacy learning by the poor, which gave them access to an increasing range of print as the century progressed, may have accelerated the disintegration of the oral culture of the past (Levine, 1986, op.cit.). Such apparent disintegration may however have had more to do with the disruption of traditional agrarian patterns of life at this time. We cannot know for sure but it is certainly true that English folklorists, spurred on by the example of the Grimm brothers and their huge collection of folktales in

Germany (1812/ tr.1823), found a much smaller number here (Marshall, 1981, op.cit.).

Once the schooling of the mass of the huge new lower classes was on the agenda, with literacy teaching primarily a controlling, civilizing process, it became clear that children's own experience, including the stories they could tell, was not to be part of the discourse of the classroom. Dickens makes this point clear in his satirical portrait of Mr. Gradgrind, an exponent of 19th century Utilitarianism, addressing Cissy Jupe (girl number 20) in *Hard Times* (Dickens, 1854). Thus, effectively, oral storytelling by pupils was dismissed as irrelevant, trivial or subversive in the context of state education.

## 7. The period of electronically mediated culture (1900-2000+)

### 7.1 Children and the continuity of the oral tradition

In the 20th century, children, particularly in the years before they are confident readers and writers, are members of an active folk culture transmitted from one generation to another (Lurie, 1990). The evidence collected in this country by the Opies (1957, 1959, 1985) is plentiful. For example, five year old girls who have recently started school, learn a form of narrative verbal art: the singing game, by apprenticing themselves to older girls in the playground. Later, in their turn, they initiate other, younger, children into these games which they have committed to memory as they play. Some of these games have been traced by folklorists, to 18th century versions (Grugeon, 1988); others are thought to be of much greater antiquity (Opie & Opie, 1985, op.cit.; Lurie, 1990, op.cit.). Such instances show us

that the oral transmission of verbal art does not just belong to the remote past, that some distinctively oral traditions remain resilient, even in a society which has been permeated by literate ways for generations.

## 7.2 Secondary orality

W.J.Ong has called the historical period before writing the '*period of primary orality*', when all communication was done face-to-face, using the resources of the human mind, memory, voice and body, as in the playground singing-game. He has also designated the present century the '*period of secondary orality*', secondary because media such as T.V. offer us illusions of spontaneous oral communication, broadcasts which are largely based on writing in the form of script or teleprompter text, prepared and edited in advance (Ong, 1982, op.cit.: 7, 3). Secondary orality ensures that viewers, even those who think of themselves as non-readers, are involved with aspects of writing, such as the use of linguistic structures, that they would be unlikely to meet elsewhere in their daily lives.

## 7.3 The fairytale in the 20th century

In this era of secondary orality, the diversification of the fairytale has intensified. Beside pantomimes and printed picture books and comics, we now have animated films, both with and without sound, films using puppets or live actors, made for transmission in the cinema or on the small screen, video- and audio-tapes and video-games. Since it is now unusual to find children without access to a T.V. set, whatever else they may lack, it is likely that many will first meet fairytales there. They will become aware of them in multiple versions, including their representations on commodities

marketed in connection with films: mugs, tee-shirts, toys and so forth (Mackey, 1994). During the rapid development of capitalism into the global system we have today, the entertainment industry, of which fairytale films are a part, has become very big business where the creative intentions of film makers are governed by a structural network of production for profit. Since the 1920s, the Disney studios have been dominant in the field. They emphasise not the magic of the old stories but rather the magic of the new technology. The communal-personal voice of the oral storyteller and the personal voice of the author of the literary fairytale are muffled and replaced by the impersonal voice of the film industry. All films made under the Disney name have conformed to the same rules, which constitute a recipe to ensure maximum profitability; these rules have remained unchanged, from 'Snow White' (1937) to 'The Lion King' (1994). Thus, although each new fairytale film seems different and exciting, it is more because of the technology than because of the stories, which conform to a stipulated pattern with an obligatory happy ending (Zipes, 1994, op.cit.). These American versions have altered the whole feeling tone of the traditional fairytale which ended optimistically but not always happily. Fairytale films show far less variation than the stories of the oral tradition taken as a whole. Further, as the fairytale has become a social institution in Europe and the English-speaking world, there has been an accompanying shrinkage in the number of tales which are widely promoted. Compared with the hundreds of tales collected from the oral tradition, the numbers included in modern printed selections, are small. A study of the availability of the Grimm collection to children in N. America in the 1970s, showed that 25 or fewer tales appeared in most selections whereas there are 210 tales in the full collection (Stone, 1975). Today, most children and adults are familiar with a mere handful.

#### 7.4 The dominance of writing in education

Writing has always been associated with power and those who are in positions of power, the 'insiders', are usually keen to keep it for themselves, excluding or narrowing opportunities for others, the 'outsiders', to join them (Kermode, 1979). We saw the truth of this in the exclusion of verbal art in English from manuscript reproduction after the Norman conquest (see p.51). As already indicated, in the 19th century, teaching the poor to write was at first thought by those with political and economic power, to be politically dangerous; when writing was introduced, it was only of a strictly transactional kind which could be vocationally useful. In the present century, the importance of writing in the curriculum has steadily increased, as testing and public examinations, which control and limit access to higher education and employment opportunities, have become more and more important. Written examinations are much more administratively convenient than oral assessment. Written work remains visible, it can be marked by people who were not present at the time it was done; it is a straightforward matter to calculate or cross-check marks given or to produce statistical analyses of test results. Since the criteria for assessment are always set by the dominant, i.e. written, mode, oral performance, whether in the form of reading aloud, monologue, small group discussion or any other appears to be administratively inconvenient, time consuming, therefore expensive and difficult to assess. Oral performance also opens the way for the idiosyncratic personal voice of the student and the subjective view of the teacher/assessor to be heard in a way that is not always administratively acceptable.

## 7.5 Discussion

This diachronic account of the oral tradition has covered oral continuities, changing communication technologies and changing contexts of power and ideology. It has shown that the fairytale is a resilient cultural form which has existed in this country for at least a thousand years, despite being neglected, banned and mutilated, because people have always needed to convert their life experience and their hopes into aesthetic forms - shared symbolic representations - proposing alternative worlds and futures to the ones they actually face (Jameson, 1981, op.cit.). The literary fairytale, created by the appropriation of oral versions is particularly susceptible to re-appropriation by oral tellers, as we can see in the example of the German women of French extraction who told the Grimm brothers stories from Perrault. It may be that the typical formal features of the oral fairytale: short length, repetitive or cumulative structure, strong imagery and spare description, all of which make it easy to remember, also enable it to be switched readily from oral to literary mode and back again (Zipes, 1988, op.cit.).

Exposure to fairytales in some, probably in many of their current manifestations, is unavoidable for modern children and it is likely that such exposure and consequent absorption of the tales will happen very early. Absorbing the tales involves taking on the conventions of their telling, their typical plots, characters, language and the emotions they evoke. Such experience, whether gained by reading illustrated picture books, through the secondary orality of filmed versions or even from oral telling (given the current revival of oral storytelling) will always involve a mixture of oral and literate modes, as this account has endeavoured to show. Children add this inheritance to what they learn in daily interaction as they gather their own



hoards of personal experience stories, family stories, anecdotes and gossip (Lurie, 1990,op.cit.; Rosen, 1985, op. cit.). In Chapter Three, I illustrate the continuity of the history in the stories themselves.

### CHAPTER THREE:

#### Paradigmatic Stories which Track the History of the Oral Tradition in Britain

##### Introduction

In this chapter, I again address the second question listed on page 30:

- *How do modern children and young people connect with the story traditions of the past?*

Here, I track the history of the oral tradition through a series of paradigmatic stories, each of which can be identified as a separate appearance of an oral folktale. Each appearance or version is known by a different title and was made when a different communication technology was dominant, viz. manuscript, print, film. Each technology used the stories in the forms best suited to contemporary listeners, readers or viewers. The oral tales are shown to be infinitely adaptable to the cultural ambience of each period and renewed by each telling, notably when the storyteller becomes the possessor of the tale.

The theoretical framework of the chapter derives from Bakhtin who, in his essay on speech genres, describes language as speech realised through bounded concrete utterances, spoken or written, enunciated by participants in different areas of human activity. An utterance can be a single word, a sentence or a complete work and boundaries are set by changes in speakers or writers. The speaker, in choosing a type of linguistic means and

referentially semantic sphere, uses a particular speech genre in response to others who have chosen to express themselves with similar compositional and stylistic features. Thus, '*any utterance is a link in the chain of speech communion. It is the active position of the speaker in one referentially semantic sphere or another*', coloured by a subjective emotional evaluation towards the subject matter (Bakhtin, 1986:84). The application of this theory enables us to see the development of the fairytale over centuries as a form of discourse continued by different individuals through different communication technologies. The unknown tellers of the oral tradition and all the makers of fairytales who came after them, playwrights, authors, film-makers, are thus diachronically as well as synchronically related to one another. Their creations, which all project utopian fantasy, are links in the same chain of speech communion.

### 1. The oral folk tale as history: 'Love Like Salt'

Complete fairytales were not put into manuscript form to be enjoyed during the mediaeval period because of the fear of heresy but they were used for other purposes. Geoffrey of Monmouth, a twelfth century Benedictine who studied and worked at Oxford and became Bishop of St. Asaph in 1152, included a traditional folktale in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (ca. 1136), a work which purports to be a history of all the kings of Britain, starting with Brutus, great-grandson of Aeneas and including, most influentially, King Arthur. With the help of modern work in folklore studies, we know that Geoffrey's account of the life of Leir, King of Britain, is a version of 'Love Like Salt' (AT 893) (Aarne, 1961). In the mediaeval period, it was usual for clergy to use fables and exempla when they preached (see Chapter One) but it seems strange to us that what we see as clearly fictional was presented

then as history. The reasons for our disagreement derive from the fact that stories found in early 12th century manuscripts, like the poem *Beowulf*, originated in pre-literate times when language was principally understood as sound in performance; memory was the storyteller's only resource and, consequently, no two experiences of the 'same' story would have been identical (Lord, 1960, op.cit.).

Shared stories such as folktales can be described as articulated social memories, transmitted orally from generation to generation. Over years, the social context in which they were created was forgotten and they became increasingly conceptualised in the form of images, ordered and linked by words. We know that, in the mind of the individual, concepts interact with other concepts, regardless of whether they are sequenced to reflect perceived truths about the world or imagined possibilities; the tendency is for the individual to assume that, if he or she remembers an event, then it must have happened. Stories in the oral tradition - articulated social memories - are believed in the same way; if they have been remembered and transmitted through generations, people believe that the events they relate must have happened or must be derived from events that did happen (Fentress & Wickham, 1992). Hence, in the pre-literate period and whilst literacy was still very restricted, fact and fiction were not distinguished.

Later in the 12th century, as manuscript literacy spread amongst churchmen, the veracity of Geoffrey of Monmouth's work was questioned by William of Newburgh (ca. 1198) and by Higden in the fourteenth century (Drabble, 1985). These later scholars were responding to the fact that writing creates texts whose stability enables them to be examined, reflected upon and categorised, in a way that is not possible in the oral tradition. I now

summarise and analyse the translation of 'Love Like Salt' given in Warner (1994, op.cit.):

An old and widowed king calls his three daughters to him and asks them how much they love him. The two older girls protest their undying love; they will love him till China and Africa meet, they will prize him as riches above pearls, above rubies, they will be true till the stars fall down, till salmon jump in the street. But the youngest, when it is her turn to speak, merely says she loves her father as meat loves salt. She will not say anything more. The king casts her out of his house, disowning her altogether. Many years later, when he has himself been beggared by his elder children's treachery, and is wandering alone, he chances upon a wedding feast; he goes in and sits down at the table. The bride notices him and recognises her father; he does not see that it is the daughter he lost. She gives an order to the servants to serve all the food without salt. It arrives and the guests taste it and push it aside; one by one they refuse to eat, crying out in disgust that the meat has no flavour. Then the old king realises the meaning of his daughter's image of long ago, and he begins to cry.

### 1.1 Analysis

The folktale has been identified as one of the cycle of 345 variants of the story generally known as 'Cinderella' (Cox, 1893, op.cit.). Within the cycle, two main strands of story are distinguishable: in the first, the heroine is humiliated by her jealous step-mother; in the second, she suffers because of her father's incestuous desires (Philip 1989). 'Love Like Salt' belongs to the second strand; it shows a daughter responding enigmatically to her father's demand for a statement of her love for him. Her puzzling answer functions simultaneously at the literal and figurative levels. Salt was used in mediaeval times as a preservative as well as a means of boosting the flavour of other substances and therefore it signified purity and honesty (as in the expression 'salt of the earth'). The king rejects his youngest daughter, preferring the fulsome hypocrisy of her sisters to her indirect but honest

statement. The figures of the king and this daughter are emblematic, the images simple but striking: the king casting his daughter out, the king weeping. He only understands what she means after he has suffered the effects of his own foolish actions and she has demonstrated her meaning in concrete terms. Then the story comes to a happy, or at least optimistic, ending, as fairytales do.

The answer to the riddle is an essential part of the story. The tale is told in a very matter-of-fact way, with no justification offered for what happens and no explicit moral judgement expressed. It is up to the listener to complete the story by understanding the tale's meaning, just as the king had to interpret his daughter's riddle. Marina Warner elucidates the traditional connection between riddling and incest as follows: sexual relations between close kin are taboo but problematic in most cultures (Levi-Strauss, 1955, *op.cit.*; Leach, 1969) and this is reflected in origin myths such as the Oedipus story and the story of Adam and Eve. Like these myths, 'Love Like Salt' faces the problem of incest by talking about it in a disguised way. In the Old Testament story of Lot, his two daughters lure their father into having sex with them, in order to preserve the purity of the blood line; thus, the responsibility for incest is laid on them. The mediaeval story marks a change; here, the daughter's protest against incest is acceptable. The symbolic world of the story reveals, through the fate of the young girl, the inferior and dependent status of women. At the same time, the behaviour of the heroine in defence of her virtue and in teaching her father (and the reader) a lesson, constitutes a form of resistance to patriarchal dominance. It is possible that this feminine point of view is a sign that the story was usually told by women (Warner, 1994, *op.cit.*).

The creation and circulation of the story in manuscript form in Latin (the language of an exclusively male elite) by a scholarly churchman, Geoffrey of Monmouth, who became a prestigious member of the church hierarchy can be seen as an appropriation by the powerful of a story which belonged to the powerless. Until challenged by later scholars, it must have seemed to those who knew it an authoritative statement about the people's history. Throughout the Middle Ages and on into the Renaissance, the story retained its popularity, appearing in fifty different accounts, including Holinshed's *The Chronicles of Englande, Scotlande and Irelande* (1577) and an anonymous drama, *The True Chronicle of King Leir* (ca. 1590) both of which were known to Shakespeare (Fraser, 1987).

## 2. The oral folktale as drama: *King Lear*

The inclusion of 'Love Like Salt' in histories, whether in Latin or in English, construed it as information for a variously restricted audience of readers and listeners; its use in drama by Shakespeare returned it to the sphere of communal oral entertainment. The Elizabethan playwright can be described as a descendant of both the Anglo-Saxon scop and the mediaeval minstrel; like the scop, he received royal patronage, his work featured kings and discussed the history of the people; like the minstrel, he entertained a broad sample of the population in a communal setting. A socially mixed audience is implied in the texts of his plays, as Chaucer's was in the *Canterbury Tales*. The staged performance, the interaction, between playwright and audience through the mediation of the actors was what counted at the time, not the publication of the play in print. It is likely that, at the time of the first performance of *King Lear*, the text existed only in the form of actors' parts and perhaps a prompt copy (Meek 1991, op.cit.).

We know, from references in many literary works of the 16th and 17th centuries, including those of Spenser, Milton, and Bunyan as well as the dramatists, that folktales were still widely known at all social levels. Therefore, it is not a surprise to find that Shakespeare took the old folk tale as the starting point for the central plot concerning King Lear and his three daughters. The subsidiary plot, about Gloucester and his blindness, he took from Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, itself derived from an old romance and ultimately from classical Greek story. Formally, the play was a five-act Renaissance drama, based on Senecan tragedy (Fraser, 1987, op.cit.). Thus, Shakespeare, like Chaucer before him, blended material from both the Little and the Great Traditions, described by Burke (1978, op.cit.).

*King Lear* discusses the nature of kingship, power, government and justice, as well as close family relationships. In the first scene, Lear demands to know how much his daughters love him, making it plain that their dowries will be proportionate to the weightiness of their love. For him, at the beginning of the play, love seems to be a form of merchandise which can be measured and priced. As in the folktale, the two elder daughters speak in hyperbole; they are well rewarded with land. The youngest, Cordelia, disappoints her father, making a clear statement about the law of exogamy regarding women. She does not defend herself in any other way; her behaviour remains a puzzle to the audience.

*Lear :* .....what can you say to draw  
*A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.*  
*Cordelia:* *Nothing, my lord.*  
*Lear:* *Nothing?*  
*Cordelia:* *Nothing.*  
*Lear:* *Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.*



*Cordelia: Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave  
My heart into my mouth.*

.....

*Cordelia: I love your Majesty  
According to my bond, no more nor less.*

.....

*You have begot me, bred me, loved me. I  
Return those duties back as are right fit,  
Obey you , love you, and most honour you.  
Why have my sisters husbands if they say  
They love you all? Haply when I shall wed,  
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry  
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.  
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,  
To love my father all.*

Although differently expressed but equally enigmatic to her father's ears, Cordelia's answer is similar to that of the heroine in the old tale because it indicates sincerity. Cordelia takes the discussion about incest further than the folktale princess by arguing logically about bonds and duties to father and husband, asserting her right to human dignity within the law, her right not to be treated as a mere chattel. Lear cannot understand her, because she will not say what he wants to hear. Unlike the folktale princess, Cordelia is portrayed realistically, being given asides to speak which reveal her feelings to the audience:

*What shall Cordelia speak? Love and be silent.*

.....

*Then poor Cordelia!  
And yet not so, since I am sure my love's  
More ponderous than my tongue.*

Later, when Lear has lost all the trappings of kingship, having gone through extremes of suffering, he learns, like the folktale king, to understand the

truth his daughter told him. Where the folktale had ended happily, with the survival and reconciliation of father and daughter, *King Lear* ends in death for both as, according to the conventions of tragedy, it must.

Realism, as used in the delineation of Cordelia, was not unknown towards the end of the feudal period; it featured sporadically in sermons, in popular dramas, such as the mystery plays and in the works of Chaucer (see p.55). It was a way of expressing, in literary terms, a rejection of the rigid hierarchies of feudalism (Fowler, 1987). It was not Shakespeare's exclusive mode but he continued the trend towards a full realism, later developed by English novelists in the 18th century (Kettle 1951).

### 3. The fairy tale as a genre of written literature for children: Perrault and the Grimms

I now digress to discuss developments on the European mainland which led to the importation of print translations of fairytales into Britain, during the 18th and 19th centuries. After the invention of the printing press, the growth of literacy and the development of commercial publishing in vernacular languages, the fairytale entered the written story tradition in the 16th and 17th centuries first in Italy, then in France. At the same time, right across W. Europe, the oral tale continued to be told to groups of all ages amongst the peasantry and to upper-class children by their nurse-maids; it was also widely read in abridged chapbook form.

The creation of the literary fairytale genre in Europe is an apt illustration of Bakhtin's theory of speech genres. Fairytales written by Straparola and

Basile in sixteenth and seventeenth century Italy and by L'Heritier, Perrault, D'Aulnoy and others in seventeenth century France are all links in a chain of speech communion. These authors were all conversant with the oral tradition as well as with the work of at least some of their predecessors. In France, the writing of fairytales began as a diversion for adults in the literary salons of the reign of Louis XIV, which were dominated by lively educated women. Though at first written for an exclusive coterie of adults, the literary fairytale was increasingly directed towards children and it was as a genre of children's literature that it proved most influential, particularly in England and in Germany (Zipes, 1983, op.cit.,1997).

### 3.1. The literary socialization of children in 17th century France

In W. Europe in the 17th century, people began to see childhood as a separate category of human life, where previously children had been thought of as small adults. Infant mortality was very high, as it had always been, but now, in the eyes of Christian moralists, children came to be seen as '*fragile creatures of God who needed to be both safeguarded and reformed*'. This concept passed into general usage and gave rise to new concerns about the socialization of children (Aries, 1962: 43). At the time, a major socio-political shift was under way in Europe, a move away from the decentralised societies of the Middle Ages and towards centralised states and religious orthodoxies. Some members of the French 'haute bourgeoisie' were in a position of increased power, close to the court, and they saw it as their mission to civilise France and other countries in accordance with their own social, political and religious views, which represented a new blend of bourgeois and aristocratic interests. Manuals of 'civillite', which made plain

the standards in dress, manners and personal deportment that were now required, proliferated; these were widely used for the formal and informal schooling of young people. As a member of the haute bourgeoisie, Charles Perrault, a royal civil servant, respected polemicist and member of the Academie Francaise who endorsed the policies of the king, frequented the literary salons in Paris; for him, engaging in the socialization of the children of the upper classes, through literature, was a logical development (Zipes, 1983, op.cit.).

Perrault published *Contes en Vers* (1695) and *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passe, Avec des Moralitez* (1697) with the declared intention of combining entertainment and instruction. His second book was published in England as *Histories or Tales of Past Times* (Tr. Samber, 1729) where it was reprinted several times during the 18th century, sometimes in bi-lingual format for use in the teaching of French. He also wrote a story in verse: 'Peau d'Asne' ('Donkeyskin'), which uses motifs like those of 'Love Like Salt'. 'Peau d'Asne' was published in pamphlet form in 1694 but omitted from the 1697 volume and from Samber's English translation, presumably because its theme was not deemed suitable for children (Carpenter and Prichard, 1984, op.cit.). Since it is much less well known than 'Cinderella', I summarise the plot of this story, then analyse it, first, to reveal the textual features arising from Perrault's use of the medium of print, which creates distance between authors and audiences. Secondly, adopting the socio-political perspective used by Zipes (1983, op.cit.), I show how Perrault's civilizing intention is revealed in the female protagonist, Donkeyskin; I then compare Perrault's 'composite' female and male protagonists and link them, as role models to the power relations between the sexes in 17th century French society.

### 3.2 'Donkeyskin'

The story of Donkeyskin is set in the vast opulent palace of a powerful king who owns a donkey that excretes gold coins. The king has a beautiful wife and a young daughter. When his wife is near to death, she makes him promise that he will only marry again if he finds a woman more beautiful, wise and accomplished than she. After her death, he searches for a second wife but finds no one to match her, except their daughter. He therefore decides to marry his daughter, even finding a 'casuist' who will make the case stand up in court. Alarmed, the daughter consults her fairygodmother who advises her to ask for impossible gifts before she will agree. A dress the colour of the weather, one the colour of the moon and a third the colour of the sun are, in turn, duly made. Finally, the fairy godmother advises the daughter to ask for the skin of the donkey which produces the king's wealth and even this is provided. Covered and masked by the donkey's pelt, the princess flees the palace secretly. With her face covered in dirt, she finds work as a humble kitchen maid at another estate. She is hard worked and ill-treated there. One day, whilst trying on her jewels and one of her beautiful dresses, she is glimpsed by a handsome prince who thinks her a goddess. He falls sick with love and asks for a cake to be made for him. Donkeyskin makes the cake and drops her ring into the mixture. When the prince finds the ring, he insists on finding the owner and so all the women of every rank at court try it; the only one it fits is Donkeyskin. Dressed in her finest robes she is taken to court where everyone is charmed with her. Her father is invited to the wedding. Time has 'banished all criminal desires' from his heart and, weeping for joy, he is reconciled with her.

#### 3.2.1 Analysis

(My analysis is partially indebted to Jack Zipes' analyses of other Perrault stories (Zipes 1983, op.cit.); he does not analyse 'Donkeyskin').

The oral storyteller could respond spontaneously in performance to the needs and demands of the audience because they were present and usually known to one another; s/he also had the advantage of being able to use the

expressive resources of face, voice and gesture, as well as words, to convey meaning. By contrast, the author, whose work is commercially printed, published and distributed, is usually not present when it is read and is unknown to most of the audience. The written words of the text must compensate for the distance between them. The effects of such compensation are visible in 'Donkeyskin'. Every move of the spare plot line of the oral tale is elaborated with sensuous detail. The female protagonist moves from high rank as the daughter of the king to low rank as a kitchenmaid, then back to high rank, as the wife of a prince. Matching these moves in the written text, details are first given of her father's palace, swarming with servants and full of remarkable possessions, including a stable of richly caparisoned horses and the gold-producing donkey; next, there are references to dirt, dishcloths and pig sties and the '*coarse witticisms made by the menservants*'; finally, the wedding is portrayed as a great ostentatious state occasion. '*Some came from the regions of the Dawn, mounted on great elephants, whilst others came from Moorish shores. Indeed, Princes arrived from every corner of the earth, and the Court overflowed with them.*' Donkeyskin's physical appearance, a focus of attention at every stage of the story, is similarly described in detail, finishing on a note of splendour to match her happiness: '*Her lovely fair hair was dressed with diamonds which made it shine like the sun; her blue eyes were wide and gentle, full of proud majesty...her figure was so slender and dainty that her waist might have been spanned by two hands*' (Lawrence, 1988 op.cit.:112).

A second feature of Perrault's tales, which may be in some measure attributable to his use of the written mode, is his frequent ironic authorial comment: about the king's short-lived grief for the death of his wife, about

the disappointment of the court, including the priest, when they hear there is to be no wedding between the king and his daughter, about the flirtatious habits of ladies. Scepticism arises from reflection and, although it can be a feature of spoken narrative, the distance between writer and audience seems to favour it more than the face to face relationship of oral storyteller and audience. Despite Perrault's evident support for the status quo, his ironic tone suggests a degree of ambivalence towards French courtly society, for all that he was anxious to encourage children to fit in to it.

The characterisation used in this story is different from the emblematic representation of the oral tale and from the realism used in the portrayal of Cordelia. The protagonist herself is a character type with obvious qualities: virtue, beauty, charm, gentleness and passivity. Unlike the active heroines of the earlier stories, she has to be told what to do. After receiving the donkey's skin from her father, she is '*quite resigned to marrying him*' (Lawrence 1988, op.cit.: 106) and flees secretly in disguise, on the advice of her fairygodmother. Thus, the self motivating integrity of the earlier characters is lost. Although she manipulates the prince by dropping her ring into the cake for him to find, she must wait for him to recognise and then marry her. In the course of the action, she moves from being a possession of her father to being a possession of her husband.

### 3.2.2 The civilising intention

The fairytale world created by Perrault is an affirmation of the world of the court of Louis XIVth. His civilising intention becomes clear when one realises that the female protagonists of all his tales share Donkeyskin's characteristics; they all also use polite speech, have correct manners and

wear elegant clothes. The typical male protagonist is very different: active, clever, courageous, ambitious and upwardly mobile; his goal is social success and achievement. He wins a wife, but she is incidental to his success. The consistent portrayal of male protagonists as powerful and active, female protagonists as dependent and passive accords with actual power relations between the sexes in 17th century France and indicates that Perrault intended his stories to provide role models for children. (Zipes, 1983, op.cit.).

On the question of incest, Donkeyskin's fairy godmother tells her, early in the story, ' *True, your father wants to marry you, and it would be a great sin to listen to his insane demand, but it may be possible to refuse his suit without openly defying him.*' The responsibility for morally correct behaviour, it seems, is to be borne by the young girl, not by her father. The moral at the end of the story is a lesson to young girls, not to their fathers: '*It is better to expose oneself to the harshest adversity rather than fail in one's duty...the strongest reasoning is but a feeble dam against the wilful demands of a mad infatuation....love cannot be bought with expensive gifts*' (Lawrence, 1988 op.cit.: 104, 113). Men, it seems, will inevitably be driven mad by desire and are not expected to exert the same virtuous self-control that women must. Unlike King Lear and the father in 'Love Like Salt', the king in this story does not have to learn a lesson; his passion merely wanes with age.

### 3.3 The literary socialization of children in 19th century Germany

The concept of a nation state with its own exclusive culture was important to Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, collecting folktales in Hesse and the Rhineland



in the early years of the 19th century. They were searching for the true German 'geist', although Germany did not come into existence as a nation until 1871 (Carter, 1990, op.cit.). During these years, there was a conscious, middle-class, movement in the German principalities towards the establishment of a nation state and the Grimms were part of this movement, which was opposed to feudal tyranny and anxious for democratic rights for the middle classes and oppressed peasantry. The brothers collected tales mainly from tellings by educated young women, of middle-class or aristocratic background, who were familiar with both oral and literary story traditions, including Perrault. They made a selection from the tales they collected and revised them progressively, through several editions, from 1812 to 1857. In making their contribution to the discourse of the fairytale, they were simultaneously dialoguing with the unknown tellers of the oral tradition whose language they wanted to reproduce, with the known tellers whose versions they had recorded, with Perrault and the other French courtly writers with whose work they were familiar, and with contemporary writers who were part of the German Romantic movement. They identified strongly with the middle class community they knew and developed a standard view of ideal family life, based on Protestant Christian values and standards of justice and decency; this they incorporated into their revisions of the tales they collected. They cut out erotic and sexual elements, added Christian expressions and references and emphasised the differences between male and female protagonists which could act as role models for children. They thus imposed on the stories their own value system, based on the Protestant ethic and patriarchalism. Like Perrault, they set standards of civilization (Zipes 1983, op.cit., 1988, op.cit.).

### 3.3.1. 'Allfur' and 'Hans the Hedgehog'

#### Grimms' Tale no. 65: 'Allfur'

Allfur's wealthy father wanted to marry her, since she was the only one whose beauty equalled that of his dead wife. She first asked for impossible gifts: three beautiful dresses and a mantle made of a thousand different kinds of fur. All the gifts were produced, in turn, but her father's intention did not waver, so she left home, taking with her a gold ring, a gold spindle and a gold reel. Commending herself to God's keeping, she lived in the forest, like a wild creature, until she was captured by the king's huntsmen, taken to his palace and set to work as a kitchen maid. When a feast was to be held so that the prince might find a bride, Allfur put on one of her beautiful gowns and appeared amongst the guests; the prince was impressed by her beauty. She returned to the kitchen after changing her dress, made bread soup for the prince and dropped her gold ring into the bowl. This string of events was repeated twice more, each time a different golden object being added to the soup. Eventually, the prince, who had not so far recognised the beautiful stranger, realised that Allfur, the kitchenmaid with a fur mantle, had the mark of a missing ring upon her grubby finger; then he knew her for the beautiful daughter of a rich man that she truly was. Marriage and happiness followed. There was no reconciliation between Allfur and her father.

#### Grimms' Tale no.108: 'Hans the Hedgehog'

A rich man, who had no son, declared that he wanted one, even if he were to be born a hedgehog. A son was duly born and he was indeed a hedgehog in the upper part of his body, a boy in the lower part. His parents were distressed and did their best to forget Hans the Hedgehog, neglecting him and wishing he would die. One day, at Hans' request, his father brought him a set of bagpipes from the market. Then, Hans asked for the cockerel to be shod and when that was done, rode off on his back into the woods, playing his bagpipes and taking with him some pigs and asses. In the forest, he sat in a tree making beautiful music on the bagpipes whilst his animals thrived and multiplied. One day, a king, who was lost in the woods, heard Hans's music and asked him the way back to his own kingdom. Hans agreed to direct him, on condition that the king would write a bond, promising to hand over to him the first thing he encountered on returning home. The king agreed but when he did go home, the first thing he met was his own beautiful daughter. In the meantime, Hans went back to his parents' house, showing them how prosperous he had become and providing pork for everyone in the village.

Ultimately, he claimed the king's daughter who said she would abide by her father's promise and marry him. Once accepted by the princess, Hans was able to remove his hedgehog skin and appear as a handsome young man, at first black, as if he had been burnt, and finally, when washed and anointed with precious salves, white and handsome. Several years later, Hans visited his father and they were reconciled.

### 3.3.2 Analysis

There are some parallels in the two tales: both protagonists leave home to recreate themselves and found new homes; at the beginning, Hans suffers from neglect and lack of love, whilst Allfur suffers from too much, or from inappropriate, love. Both draw strength and protection from the forest and in the end, both are transformed and become wealthy through marriage. There are also contrasts: throughout the action, both Allfur and Hans seem to be aware of their destiny but they go about reaching it in different ways within a framework of Christian values and a dominant patriarchal code. Allfur is virtuous but, like Donkeyskin, she does not challenge her father to think about his behaviour. Like her, she must secretly work for the prince to admire and then recognise her; her ultimate happiness depends on being chosen by the right man. As a female, she is still, to some extent, a chattel of her father's whose ownership is transferred to her husband. Hans, on the other hand, a total outcast, takes active control of his future, organising his father to help him leave home; he shows self confidence-even pride, becoming a successful pig breeder, a provider of food, holding kings to their promises. More than this, (in a section of the story which I omitted for reasons of length), he ruthlessly punishes the daughter of another king who treated him with contempt, as though he were illiterate and stupid. Through his determination and cunning, Hans wins a princess as a bride, a form of

acceptance which leads to his becoming handsome as well as wealthy and securing, at last, his father's approval. Since Hans, an only son, was reconciled to his father, he would be able to inherit his father's wealth. My analysis concurs with Zipes's view of the typical male and female protagonists in the Grimms' tales. He finds that the typical hero learns to be active, reasonable or cunning, competitive, industrious and acquisitive; the typical heroine learns to be passive, obedient, self sacrificing, hardworking, patient and virtuous (Zipes 1988, op.cit.).

### 3.4 Discussion

As already indicated, my account of the development of the literary fairytale for children owes a good deal to the socio-political perspective proposed by Zipes; I find his analysis of the civilising intentions of Perrault and the Grimms convincing (1983, op.cit., 1988, op.cit.). Zipes goes on to argue that, ultimately, the classic literary fairytales are harmful to children because they promote codes of behaviour calculated to make them accept the injustices of patriarchal societies. I do not accept this view because of the special nature of fairytales and the way in which they work upon listeners or readers. Fairytales are fantasies with magical plots; they adopt a single point of view, that of the protagonist. Thus, it is as if the protagonist is making the story up, making what she or he wants to happen, happen. This single point of view is usually adopted by the teller/reader/listener. Anne Wilson believes that the changes made by the civilizers to the oral tales were actually superficial and did not affect the deeper meaning of those tales, which they were probably unaware of. Her view can be tested by constructing the following summary: a young girl, alarmed by the proposal of a taboo sexual relationship, refuses it by leaving home in disguise, going

through a period of suffering and ill treatment, coming to terms with her feelings and, finally, establishing a new home and an acceptable sexual relationship. This could be a summary of any of the first four paradigmatic stories included in this account because all four are about the female protagonist's emotional conflict, suffering and renewal. It is possible to construe the fairygodmother, added by Perrault, as simply an externalization of the heroine's inner dialogue when she is distressed. The fifth story, 'Hans the Hedgehog', follows a similar pattern in the life of the male protagonist: unhappiness followed by exile, the acquisition of self knowledge, the founding of a new home and the discovery of sexual happiness. Bald summaries of this kind reveal the enduring initiatory role of the fairytale in human society (Eliade, 1963, op.cit.). Thus we see that the additions and alterations made by the civilizers to the stories were superficial. Anne Wilson comments that individual writers often '*operate at two entirely separate levels of the mind, creating or re-creating an irrational fantasy at one, probably unconscious, level while dressing it up at another, conscious level, adding descriptive details, developments of character, moralizings, reflections, rationalizations*' (Wilson, 1984 op.cit.:84). This description seems to be highly relevant to both Perrault and the Grimms as they appropriated and rewrote fairytales from the oral tradition.

When the Grimm brothers began their work, early in the 19th century, the literary fairytale for children was already a socio-cultural institution in W. Europe. Through Perrault's use of the genre for authoritarian civilizing purposes, it had become part of the social fabric, involving publishers and booksellers. The Grimms continued the process of institutionalization. The revisions they made to their tales were all aimed at making them more suited to their audience of middle class parents and children: the 'household'.

Clearly, the revisions were well judged, because the collection was immediately popular in Germany and, for 100 years, remained a best seller there, second only to the Bible. It has gone on to achieve world wide fame and has become a classic collection, especially popular across the English-speaking world (Zipes, 1988, op.cit.).

#### 4. The fairytale controversy in Britain

In 1823, when the English translation of the Grimms' collection appeared in Britain, arguments about the advisability of allowing children to read or hear fairytales were under way. The debate had originated in the 18th century when a secular, nationalist and progressive individualism dominated enlightened thought amongst professional and middle class people. It was considered to be essential to set the individual free from the shackles of the Middle Ages, including beliefs in magic and superstition (Hobsbawm, 1962, op.cit.). Throughout the 18th century, as the scientific view of the world became increasingly influential and more widely dispersed, pre-empirical modes of thought were, more and more, seen by members of the prosperous middle and upper classes in England as the preserve of the uneducated: children and 'childish' adults (the lower classes). Growing up meant growing out of fantasy, (associated with pleasure and self indulgence). Education was now to be an ascent towards rationality and attachment to fantasy was increasingly viewed as immoral, mentally regressive and vulgar (Summerfield, 1984, op.cit.).

Concern about the correct upbringing of the young was not a new phenomenon in England. 15th century 'Books of Courtesye' had advised young boys of noble birth how to behave when living away from home in

other noble households or at court; 16th century 'Books of Nurture' (e.g. Rhodes ca. 1545) covered the moral welfare as well as the manners of the young. In the 18th century, moral concern included strong objections to fairytales on the grounds of their irrationality as well as their connections with the lower classes. Didactic moral tales for children now appeared, largely as a reaction to the popularity of fairytales and chapbooks. These were realistic narratives of self improvement based on rational thought. *Giles Gingerbread* (1764) concerns a young boy who becomes a rich man through his own efforts. The protagonist of *Primrose Prettyface* (1783) is his female counterpart who eventually marries a rich young man and becomes Lady of the Manor. By the end of the 18th century, the didacticism of moral tales had become more and more overt and increasing numbers were sold. At the turn of the century, the stories took on a more strongly religious colouring as a result of the growth of the Sunday School movement and the aim of writing became to produce a godly rather than a rational child (Carpenter and Prichard, 1984 op.cit.). The fairytale controversy spread to America and continued in England up to the middle of the 19th century, when fantasy was finally accepted as respectable written literature for children (see p.70).

##### 5. The filmed fairytale: 'Sapsorrow'

Zipes sees Disney Studios as perpetuating the civilizing intention of Perrault and the Grimms in the 20th century, an intention now subordinate to the entertainment industry's need to make profits. The typical Disney fairytale film uses the magic of technology rather than the magic of stories to spellbind its viewers; stories conform to a set pattern calculated to envelop and 'sweep away' audiences rather than to stimulate them to think. Various

small film companies, which cannot compete economically with Disney, have also created fairytale films exploring the medium in new ways, sometimes following the basic Disney pattern, sometimes subverting the orthodoxy of the classic tales and the approaches favoured by Disney. One such company is Jim Henson Associates (Zipes, 1997, op.cit.). I now describe and analyse 'Sapsorrow', a short film made for T.V. by Henson Associates in the 1980s, as part of a series called 'The Storyteller'. 'Sapsorrow' is a version of the Grimms' 'Allfur', incorporating elements from other variants of 'Cinderella'.

### 5.1 'Sapsorrow'

The T.V. version of 'Sapsorrow' deliberately avoids enveloping the viewer and creates, instead, a storytelling performance, using a mixture of live actors, puppets and silhouettes. An actor dressed as a bearded old man, who speaks directly to the viewer, becomes the storyteller; his talking dog is a puppet who listens and comments on the stories from time to time during the tellings, often looking at the viewers, sometimes with wide-eyed belief, sometimes with scepticism. The effect is to make the viewers feel they are all part of the same audience. Clearly, the feeling is illusory but even so, the format provokes a more thoughtful relationship to the story than Disney's recipe. As the story gets under way, humour is introduced in the form of the heroine's two ugly sisters, figures borrowed from modern Cinderella pantomime and played by two well known female TV comic actors. (This choice of performers well known from adult programmes and films suggests that Henson was anxious to appeal to a 'family audience' just as the Grimms and Disney were.) Perhaps because of modern concern about child abuse, the incest motive is now sidestepped.



The king insists that his daughter, Sapsorrow, must marry him because she has accidentally put his magic wedding ring on her finger and it fits her perfectly. He arranges for three beautiful dresses, one silver like the moon, one sparkling with stars like the night sky and one golden like the sun, to be made for Sapsorrow. On the day that he believes will be the wedding day, he weeps miserably. The princess meanwhile has left the room where she has been hiding, leaving only the gold ring, lying on the floor.

The fugitive Sapsorrow has no fairy godmother but is cared for by the animals and birds, who have made her a mantle of fur and feathers. Wearing this disguise, she finds kitchen work at another palace where the servants sneer and call her 'Raggle Tag'. She proves to be not a typical Grimm heroine at all, more a modern teenager. Whilst dressed in her cloak, on her knees polishing the floor, she challenges the prince who is staring at her with haughty disdain, with a bold look, remarking, '*If there were a tax on looking, we'd all be beggars, sire*' (Minghella, 1991:122). At the ball that night, dressed in the first of her beautiful gowns, she becomes the traditional mysterious stranger the prince falls in love with. As is to be expected in a fairytale, she moves from one incarnation to the other twice more, before the denouement of the story. Each day, when she and the prince meet, they talk about their feelings and what it is like to be in love, each learning from the other. In this way, their common dilemmas are sorted out in talk before he recognises her. They come together for the traditional ending only after she has learnt that her father is now dead and has proved that the golden slipper fits her perfectly. The birds, squirrels and other forest creatures (puppets) then carry away the Raggletag disguise and dress her in one of her beautiful gowns for the final embrace.

### 5.1.1 Analysis

This final fairytale paradigm subverts the norms of Disney fairytale films and shows how technical inventiveness does not have to be accompanied by hackneyed narrative and stereotypical male and female character types. Further, the film includes a definite sense of fun, an aspect of fairytale which is not taken into account in most of Zipes's criticism (Wilson, 1984,

op.cit.). The behaviour of the talking dog puppet and the slapstick humour of the ugly sisters are likely to be enjoyed by young children, whilst the irony of the verbal manoeuvrings of the Prince and Sapsorrow on the subject of love and romance will appeal to teenagers and probably adults as well. In such ways, this small film returns the fairytale to the audience of people of all ages. Since, in Britain, most television sets are in the home, 'Sapsorrow' is also a domestic telling, shadowing the time-honoured fireside tradition of oral storytelling (Haggarty, 1995).

In the book which accompanies the series and which is illustrated with stills from the films, playwright Anthony Minghella, who was responsible for the screen plays, recalls, in his foreword, the words of Italo Calvino who, after after finishing work on his celebrated collection of Italian folktales, said he felt like '*a link in the anonymous chain without end by which fairytales are handed down*'. Minghella tells us that he, too, now thinks of himself as part of the same chain (Minghella, 1991, op.cit.:4). It is worth noting, in the context of the history covered in Chapter One and illustrated here, that neither writer *is* anonymous, as far as his readers are concerned, but that both of them are certainly part of Bakhtin's 'chain of speech communion' which interlinks the oral and the written traditions of storytelling (Bakhtin, 1986, op.cit.).

## 6. Discussion

This chapter has shown how each variant appearance of the fairytale took on the local colour of the particular historical context in which it was created, including the purposes and values of its author. It has also shown that, having been a genre of story enjoyed by people of all ages and social

strata ('Love Like Salt' and the Cordelia plot) the fairytale became a form intended specifically for children. The literary fairytale, once a form of literary socialization for middle class children ('Donkeyskin' and 'Allfur'), has since become a central feature of children's literature in illustrated storybooks, in film and on video. In contact with any/all of these ubiquitous modern versions, children and young people such as Emma now gain access to at least some of the stories of the ancient oral tradition.

The explanatory power of the literature consulted so far made clear to me the historical dimension of oral stories told today and the ways in which modern children connect with them. However, it did not explain why modern young people are not usually asked to tell oral stories themselves in the educational context. I therefore consulted other kinds of literature in order to address the third of my questions (p.30):

- *Why does the education system not treat the oral and written modes equally?*

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### Changing Conceptualisations of Literacy

#### Introduction

This chapter maintains the historical perspective, constructing a further diachronic account, this time at the level of cultural theory rather than social or literary history. In order to understand the reasons why pupils' oral storytelling is not already a part of the secondary English curriculum, I asked (p.30):

- *Why does the education system not treat the oral and written modes equally?*

Addressing this question, the chapter first draws on early- and mid- 20th century work in the fields of Classical studies, Anthropology and Linguistics which supports the theory of an oral-literate divide, attributing civilising consequences to the introduction of reading and writing into a society. Although the descriptive terms differed, the idea of a divide between oral and literate cultures was widely agreed amongst scholars in different fields (Scribner & Cole 1981). The divide theory supports a particular model of literacy as a collection of skills relating to reading and writing, to be acquired by the individual; this model underlies our education system including the acceptance by teachers that writing is what really counts.

Secondly, the chapter draws on more recent empirical work in Psychology, Anthropology, Linguistics and Literacy Studies which undermines the validity of the divide theory. An alternative model of literacy is described;

this acknowledges the importance of speaking and listening as well as reading and writing as part of literacy, now seen as located in social practices. This second model, which accepts the notion that in any society there are multiple literacies, is hospitable to the oral mode.

### 1. The Primitive-Civilized Dichotomy

Human beings tend to think in binary oppositions; one common dichotomy arising from this tendency is the we-they/us-them contrast, through which people express their sense of cultural separateness and their ethnocentric prejudices, privileging their own cultural group or sub-group whilst stereotyping and denigrating other groups. In the 19th century, English intellectuals in many different fields of work assumed that people of the non-white races were lower on the scale of social evolution than whites, e.g. Kipling, who described colonial peoples as '*the White man's burden*..' (Gould 1981). The contrast between the primitive (or the savage) and the civilised has been influential in this century in both popular and academic thinking. This contrast derives in part from an evolutionary view of social development according to which society progresses from inferior to superior forms, with modern man at the pinnacle of the process.

Primitive societies are characterized as small, homogeneous, non-literate and regulated by face-to-face encounters, with a strong sense of group identity (Evans -Pritchard 1951; Douglas 1973). They have sometimes been said to be mystical and pre-logical in their thinking i.e. not capable of rational thought (Levi-Bruhl 1910). Civilised or modern societies are characterized as essentially urban, containing large diverse groups of people with widespread literacy and technology; they have a sense of history and

science, based on logical reasoning. In such societies, social relationships tend to be impersonal and life is lived within grids of impersonal forces and rules (Douglas 1973, op.cit.).

The primitive-civilized dichotomy, which continues to be influential in popular thinking today, was undermined in the early years of this century by field anthropologists who expressed approval of many of the practices of primitive peoples. Evans-Pritchard (1937) maintained that, provided one accepted their premises, the Azande people of Central Africa were just as capable of logical thinking as any Western scientists. The classification of the natural world by members of South American tribes was thought by Levi-Strauss to be as complex as classifications made by biologists in W. Europe (Levi-Strauss (1975; 1963; 1966). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated (Sapir 1921) that there is no such thing as a primitive language and that the languages of primitive cultures are amongst the most complex in existence (Gee, 1990).

## 1.2 The science of the concrete and the science of the abstract

The primitive-civilised contrast has appeared in other guises through the century. Levi-Strauss suggests a dichotomy in terms of two distinct modes of scientific thought: the supremely concrete (primitive) and the supremely abstract (civilised). Primitive cultures use events from the natural world, which they order in the form of myths or totemic systems to create structures by means of which they can think about the natural world. Mythical thought is a kind of intellectual 'bricolage' or improvisation whereby systems of stories are ordered and re-ordered to find meaning. In totemic structures, a certain clan is identified with an animal (e.g. a bear or

an eagle) and is, by analogy, then said to have the characteristics of that animal. Modern science, by contrast, manipulates not objects and images from the natural world but abstractions, numerical, logical or linguistic and, through these, tries to change the world. Levi-Strauss sees primitive thought as imprisoned within events and experiences, modern abstract science as able to change the world (Levi-Strauss, 1966 op.cit.).

One matter which is not addressed by Levi-Strauss' analysis is the continuity of magical forms of thought in modern societies. For example, rugby teams are often named after powerful/deadly animals: panthers, vipers, tigers, a custom which suggests that names continue to have symbolic importance as they did under totemism. Magical thought, in the form of superstitions and belief in clairvoyance and the paranormal, for example, still have power today. Thus we see that the distinction between modes of thought is not as clear cut as Levi-Strauss seems to suggest. His work raises - but does not answer - the question: How does a society move from the science of the concrete to the science of the abstract? The answer, according to Havelock (1963, op.cit.) and Goody (1977) is: through the introduction of literacy.

## 2. The construction of the concept of an oral-literate divide

Works by three theorists: Havelock (1963, op.cit.), Goody (1977, op.cit.) and Ong (1982) have been particularly influential in the formation of the concept of the oral-literate divide.

### 2.1 Havelock: *Preface to Plato* (1963, op.cit.)

In discussing Ancient Greece, the classicist, Eric Havelock argues that

Homeric Greek society was non-literate. Its culture was preserved in the form of artefacts and practices, which could be physically passed on or demonstrated to succeeding generations and works of verbal art, epics, which carried, in their mythical stories, the knowledge and values of the society. The preserved wisdom of the epics was transmitted to the people in oral performances. Such performances were strongly rhythmical and consisted of memorised formulae, motifs and themes which could be re-ordered to fit each occasion and each audience (Lord 1960, *op.cit.*; Parry 1971, *op.cit.*). Since the whole was dependent on memory, and was recounted in story form, no abstract expression of knowledge could be used. This kind of discourse represented the limits within which the mind of the members of that culture could express itself, the degree of sophistication to which they could aspire. Both teller and listeners involved in oral performances were under the spell of the metre and rhythm of the verse and would accept its message without question. The Greeks were awakened from their trance-like state by the introduction of alphabetic script literacy. Refreshment of memory through written signs enabled a reader to dispense with most of the emotional identification which ensured that the acoustic record would be remembered. In the process of producing written language using an alphabetic system, a writer is forced to engage in abstract operations, which provide the basis for the formation of true concepts (Havelock 1963, *op.cit.*).

In his *Apology* Plato portrays Socrates as saying to the poets, 'What do you mean?' This amounts to a demand that their work be said differently, non-poetically, non-rhythmically, and non-imagistically. It is as if Plato is pleading for the invention of an abstract language of science to replace the concrete language of oral memory. This is a contrast similar to that between



the science of the concrete and the science of the abstract, which Levi-strauss saw as two different ways of knowing the world (Gee 1990, op.cit.). Havelock associates different modes of thought with oral and written language and identifies linguistic differences in the two modalities. Scribner & Cole (1981, op.cit.) note that differences in thought are both inferred from and proved by the same language specimens. Havelock's characterization of Greek culture has been used as a description of oral cultures generally and as a foundation of the argument that it is the presence or absence of literacy which, more than anything else, creates a great divide between human cultures and their ways of thinking.

## 2.2 Goody: *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (1977, op.cit.)

The social anthropologist, Goody, moves beyond ancient Greek culture to modern oral and semi-literate cultures. He declares himself anxious to maintain a balance between, on the one hand the refusal to admit that there are any differences in cognitive processes or cultural developments between primitive and civilised (or simple and complex) societies and, on the other hand, extreme dualism such as that shown by Levi-Bruhl (1910, op.cit.). An earlier paper maintains that the invention of literacy changed the whole structure of human cultural tradition, separating pre-history from history (Goody & Watt, 1963). Like Havelock (1963, op. cit.), the authors focus on the classical Greek world. They draw attention to the fact that writing speech down enabled people to separate words clearly, to manipulate their order, to develop syllogistic reasoning and to perceive contradictions, since utterances made at one time or place could now be compared with those made at another. They note that the rise of alphabetic literacy in post-Homeric Greece occurred during the period in which the disciplines of

history and logic took shape and assume connections between the two phenomena (Goody and Watt 1963, op.cit.).

Goody (1977, op.cit.) suggests that many of the valid aspects of the vague dichotomies which have been noted between savage and modern societies can be related to changes in modes of communication, especially the introduction of writing. The growth of individualism, the development of abstract thought and reasoning as used in modern science, and the development of more depersonalised and more abstract systems of government are all related to the introduction of writing. He distinguishes between full or universal literacy and restricted literacy, which is the norm in almost all non-technological societies and perhaps in sections of modern technological societies as well. Goody (1977, op.cit.). He extends the consequences (or implications, Goody, 1968) of literacy beyond the individual's thought processes to include major characteristics of modern Western urbanised society. This view implies a reification of literacy, the assumption that literacy can, of itself, cause change. The truth is that literacy in the sense of reading and writing, is an inert technology of communication; it is only in the ways that it is used by human beings in specific social and cultural settings that it can be influential (Gee 1990, op.cit.; Graff 1987; Finnegan 1988, op.cit.).

### 2.3 Ong: *Orality and Literacy* (1982, op.cit.)

Extending the work of Havelock and Goody, Ong makes a sweeping generalisation about orality and literacy as representing a great divide in human thought, culture and history. Commitment of the spoken word to writing, the move from the oral-aural to the visual dimension, enlarges the

potentiality of language and restructures consciousness. Thus, it changes the way in which we perceive human identity. Writing enables the human mind to achieve its full potential; it is necessary for the development of science, history, philosophy and for the understanding of literature, art and language. Ong lists the features of thought and expression typical of oral culture. The first, following Havelock, is the use of ready-made formulaic expressions, like proverbs, which are shaped and patterned to be memorable. They use, for example, rhythm, repetition and antithesis ('In for a penny, in for a pound') or images ('too many cooks spoil the broth') which make recall easy.

Further characteristics of the style of orally based thought and expression are as follows. It is

- (i) *additive rather than subordinative*; (linking ideas in a chain is easiest for the speaker who has no record of what s/he has just said in front of him/her);
- (ii) *aggregative rather than analytical*; (the elements of expression tend to be clusters of words rather than single ones, hence: 'the brave soldier' rather than 'the soldier', 'the beautiful princess' rather than 'the princess');
- (iii) *redundant or 'copious'*; (repeating what has just been said is a way of keeping the listener on track with the speaker);
- (iv) *conservative or traditionalist*; (repetition tends to bring about retention of whatever has already been learnt);

- (v) *close to the human life world*; (information related is not divorced from human activity e.g. biblical genealogies are related in a context of human activity: 'x begat y');
- (vi) *agonistically toned*; (knowledge is situated within a context of struggle as, for example, in the proverb whose wisdom counters that of another, e.g. '*Many hands make light work*' and '*too many cooks spoil the broth*');)
- (vii) *empathetic and participatory*; (the teller of a tale expresses a strong identification with both subject and audience, the audience with both teller and subject);
- (viii) *homeostatic*; (remembered information is related in accord with a greater regard for the present state of affairs than the past);
- (ix) *situational rather than abstract*; (concepts are used in operational frames of reference that are minimally abstract).

To varying degrees many cultures and subcultures, even in a high-technology ambience, preserve much of the mind-set of primary orality (Ong, 1982, op.cit.). Thus the oral-literate dichotomy is made relevant to modern Western society, the contrast being now between people belonging to different strata or sub-cultures of the same culture.

## 2.4 Discussion

The Havelock-Goody-Ong line of reasoning sees the introduction of writing

into a culture as producing qualitative changes both in the thought processes of individuals and in social life. This view assumes that speech is natural to human beings, whereas writing, which comes later and is based on speech, is an invention, a technology. Certainly speech seems natural, but this is because its origins in human history are remote and because, individually, we cannot remember our pre-literate pasts. A second assumption is that the written mode is superior to, an improvement on, the oral. This assumption must derive, in part, from the evolutionary and progressive view of human history referred to at the beginning of this chapter. It also derives, I suggest, from the writing-saturated cultural traditions of scholars in the social sciences. Thirdly, this line of thought assumes that both orality and literacy are self-evidently separate, self-standing ways of expressing meaning. More recent, empirical, evidence shows that orality and literacy take many diverse forms in different cultures. They are used differently in differing social contexts and, insofar as oral and literate modes can be distinguished as separate, they mutually interact and affect one another. The relations between oral and literate modes are problematic rather than obvious. The theory of an oral-literate divide identifies patterns which are put forward as universal. However, the three studies referred to in this section are mostly speculative and hypothetical - not empirically based. More recent studies, based on ethnographic or documentary evidence (e.g. Graff 1979; Scribner & Cole 1981, op.cit.; Clanchy 1993, op.cit.), show that literacy is employed in widely divergent ways in different societies.

### 3. The autonomous model of literacy

The model of literacy which underlies the works of Havelock, Goody and Ong, referred to above, is traditional. Literacy has been conceptualised as a

unified set of skills to be acquired by the individual person learning to read and write, a concept which has been termed 'the autonomous model of literacy'. According to this model, literacy is a neutral technology of the intellect, independent of social context, whose consequences for society and cognition can be derived from its intrinsic character (Street, 1984; 1993).

### 3.1 Essay-text literacy

The educationist, Olson, accepts the framework of theory about the consequences of literacy set by Parry (1971, op.cit.), Havelock (1963, op.cit.) and Goody & Watt (1963, op.cit.) among others. He clearly adopts a view of literacy which conforms to the autonomous model. From this base, he develops his own view, which is that, whereas, in speech, meaning is context-dependent, in writing, it is context-independent, i.e. the meaning is in the text. Whereas speech develops principally the inter-personal function of language, writing serves to develop its logical function. The introduction of alphabetic writing into Ancient Greece promoted widespread literacy by providing a distinctive sign to represent each sound in the spoken language. Thus, explicitness and the reduction of ambiguity in verbal expression became possible. Explicitness permitted the preservation of meaning over time and space and its recovery by readers without the need for any intermediary. The Greeks began developing a writing style that culminated in the essayist technique which involved formulating statements, deriving their implications, testing the truth of those implications and using the results to revise or generalise from the original statements. In this way, they produced autonomous formalized text. In modern times this essayist technique is supremely exemplified in the works of the 17th century English empiricist philosopher, Locke, and it is this style which children are

inducted into in modern Western schools (Olson, 1977).

### 3.2 Discussion

From the characteristics of essayist writing, Olson draws generalisations about writing per se as though it were a free-floating technology, without historical or ideological context. Hildyard & Olson (1978) cite, as origins of essayist literacy, the charter of the Royal Society of London which demanded 'a mathematical plainness of language' and a 'rejection of all amplifications, digressions and swellings of style', i.e. a style necessary for the development of scientific, logical thinking (1663). At the time, these demands were weapons in the battle for patronage (i.e. for status and funding) which the Society was waging with its rival, the British Academy. Thus, they had political and ideological importance (Street 1984, op. cit.).

Hildyard & Olson (1978, op.cit.) justify the huge expenditure on education in modern Western states on the grounds that it develops intellectual competence in pupils that would otherwise go largely undeveloped. This is itself an acknowledgement of the social, political and ideological importance of literacy and schooling. The particular views on literacy expressed by Olson (1977, op.cit.) and Hildyard & Olson (1978, op.cit.) are themselves ideological in origin and derive from the writers' own work practices. The essay style belongs to the Western academic tradition of writing, which Olson himself is a part of. His valuing so highly this particular form of literacy can be seen as a way of privileging his own social formation and language (Street 1984, op.cit.).

#### 4. The empirical challenge to the theory of an oral-literate divide

The autonomous model situates literacy within the individual learner's psychological and linguistic development. Empirically based work carried out by linguists and psychologists in the 1980s suggests that a review of this model and of the theory of an oral-literate divide based upon it, is required.

##### 4.1 Integration versus involvement, not literacy versus orality

As a linguist, Chafe follows up the assumption made in Havelock (1963,op.cit.) and fostered by Ong (1982, op.cit.) that there are linguistic features specific to speech and to writing. He draws a distinction between writing and speech: writing is integrated and detached; speech is fragmentary and involved. The contrast is based on his examination of writing in the form of essays, and speech in the form of spontaneous conversation. The language produced in the two kinds of discourse differs because the processes of production are different. Writing is slower than speech but reading is faster, hence writers can take time to review and shape their thoughts into more complex products. Speakers are in a face-to-face situation, where each of the interlocutors must take their turn and may interrupt each other; they have to think on their feet and hence the text produced is likely to be fragmentary. The (usual) absence of the writer's audience enables the product to be socially detached; the (usual) presence of the listener causes the speaker's text to be more socially involved (Chafe, 1985).

These findings can be objected to on the grounds that it is unreasonable to generalise from such specific examples at the opposite ends of a spectrum of



formality. One can easily think of uses of speech and writing which would have very different characteristics. For example: a political speech is a genre of spoken discourse which is likely to be syntactically integrated and socially detached; personal notes passed between pupils under the desk in lessons are likely to be fragmentary and involved; a novel may make use of features such as fragmentary syntax and involvement for aesthetic effect. Chafe himself is aware that his characterisations of speech and writing are poles of a continuum. He goes on to show that many oral cultures, in their public verbal art associated with ritual and other formal occasions, use formulaic patterning and rhythm and often syntactic complexity. Thus, they achieve both a more integrated and a more detached text than is found in spontaneous conversation, one that is an analogue of a written text. Examples of this phenomenon were found in Homer by Havelock and can be found in *Beowulf* and the Bible; in each case, the text is a representation of recorded oral verbal art. The phenomenon occurs because the conditions of public performance are similar to those of writing, involving some degree of memory and deliberate learning, as well as detachment from the audience (Chafe, 1985, op.cit.). Akinnaso also finds a parallel between the ritual language of Yoruba chants from an oral West African culture and Western academic prose (Akinnaso, 1981).

The concept of a speech-writing contrast must be abandoned in favour of a continuum. Different cultural practices call for particular uses of language patterned in certain ways, using features such as integration/fragmentation, and detachment/involvement to various degrees. Sometimes these cultural practices necessitate the use of speech, sometimes, in a literate society, they call for the use of writing. Chafe's findings suggest the need to study both oral and written language in different cultural contexts.

#### 4.2 Literacy and higher order cognitive skills

The question of whether literacy leads to higher order cognitive skills, as suggested by Havelock (1963, op.cit.) and Goody (1977, op.cit.), was addressed by Vygotsky and Luria in their research amongst the population of Soviet Central Asia in the 1930s. There, a previously non-literate population had been introduced to literacy and other practices of technological society in a short space of time. Luria compared literate and non-literate members of the population on a series of reasoning tasks which included categorisation and the handling of syllogisms. The literate grouped objects from an array on the basis of abstract word meanings; the non-literate grouped the objects presented on the basis of concrete, existential settings. These differences are compatible with the reasoning of Havelock and Goody (Luria, 1976). However, it was unclear whether the differences in the results were caused by literacy itself, by formal schooling or possibly by the new social institutions that the Russian revolution had exposed the subjects to. It is extremely difficult to separate the effects of literacy from the effects of schooling, which are broader than literacy. In school, a student is involved in learning a set of complex role relationships, general cognitive techniques, ways of approaching problems, different genres of talk and interaction, and an intricate set of values concerned with communication, interaction, and society as a whole (Wertsch 1985).

The cognitive effects of literacy were redefined by psycholinguists Scribner & Cole, who conducted research amongst the Vai people of Liberia during the 1970s. The Vai people have three different forms of literacy which they use for distinct purposes: literacy in English, acquired in school, used in

connection with government and education; literacy in the Vai language (a syllabic language) learnt from family and peers, used for letters and for commercial purposes; alphabetic literacy in Arabic, used for reading and memorizing the Koran. The researchers addressed two questions:

1. Is it literacy itself or formal schooling that affects mental functioning (producing higher order mental skills)?
2. Can one distinguish among the effects of forms of literacy use for different functions in the life of an individual or society?

Some of the Vai people are literate in one, some in two, some in three of the languages and some in none at all. Hence it was quite easy for Scribner & Cole to discover - through tests of taxonomic skills and logical reasoning similar to those used by Vygotsky and Luria - whether it was literacy per se or schooling, which produced the results they obtained. If it was literacy per se, all literates should show effects, if it was schooling, only those who were literate in English should do so. The results were that neither Vai script literacy nor Arabic literacy was found to be associated with higher order intellectual skills. Only literacy in English, the one form learnt in school, was associated with some types of decontextualisation and abstract reasoning. However, schooling was found to have narrow effects, not to give rise to higher mental abilities in any general, global, sense. Scribner & Cole's conclusion was that school fosters abilities in expository talk in contrived situations (Scribner & Cole, 1973). Schooled subjects could talk about categorisation and abstract reasoning tasks better than non-schooled subjects and they continued to be able to do so, even though their ability to do the tests fell away more, the longer they had been out of school.

On the basis of this evidence, Scribner & Cole opt for a 'practice account of literacy'. This is a literacy that enhances specific skills that are practised in carrying out that literacy e.g. Vai literacy, used for writing letters, enables people to talk about correctness and the quality of letters. School literacy enables them to talk about school topics. They oppose claims that deep psychological differences divide literate and non-literate populations. '*On no task-logic, abstraction, memory, communication - did we find all non-literates performing at lower levels than all literates..*' (Scribner & Cole, 1981, op.cit.: 251).

The tests of cognitive skills which were used by Vygotsky and Luria and Scribner & Cole assumed that literacy is a homogeneous phenomenon which has a uniform impact on all aspects of higher mental functioning (Wertsch 1985, op.cit.). Scribner & Cole found that the tests did not test generalisable higher order intellectual skills but skills specific to schooled literacy. Significantly, this was the literacy closest to that of the testers themselves. A researcher who assumes an autonomous model of literacy - as described above - is likely, on looking at the literacy practices of other cultures, to see only his own literacy (Street 1993, op.cit.). When people of one social group make up tests and say that they are related to mental skills and not to particular social practices, they are privileging those they are socialized into themselves (Gee 1990, op.cit.).

#### 4.3 The pragmatic mode and the syntactic mode

Many of the tasks used to measure such things as cognitive flexibility, logical reasoning, abstractness are really tests of the ability to use language

explicitly. Givon (1979) places explicitness in communication on a continuum between two poles: the pragmatic mode and the syntactic mode. At the pragmatic mode pole, the speaker chains strings of clauses loosely together, uses prosodic devices to signal meaning and relies on the hearer to draw inferences on the basis of shared knowledge. Interaction and the collaborative negotiation of meaning between speaker and listener are paramount. At the syntactic mode pole, the speaker uses precise and varied lexical items and explicit syntactical structures, such as subordination, leaving very little to be inferred by the listener. Grammar takes on the burden of communication and social interaction is downplayed. These modes can be used in speech or writing e.g. personal letter: pragmatic; spoken lecture:syntactic. Givon's view is that the degree of explicitness used is a matter of convention. Some cultures and some unschooled people in our culture do not employ the convention of explicitness i.e. telling people what is obvious to both anyway. Explicitness is a characteristic of the verbal expression of the schooled middle class and is used in the home and in schools, as when children are made to tell what is already known, or to speak/write in full sentences in answer to questions, in order to prove that they can do this.

Essay-text literacy values are values of explicitness. Thus they are actually not autonomous but ideological, i.e. privileging one kind of social formation in particular, as if it were natural or universal or at least the endpoint of a normal developmental progression. The distinction between the two communicative modes which is drawn by Givon represents a re-coding of Ong's distinction between the features of oral and literate cultures (Gee 1990 op.cit.).

#### 4.4 Discussion

From the three studies outlined in this section, two important points emerge:

- orality and literacy should be represented as a continuum of communicative modes rather than a clear-cut contrast and
- literacy is part of socialization.

Chafe's work makes the speech-writing contrast look problematic, not simple, as implied by the divide theory. Different cultural practices evoke particular uses of patterned language with features such as integration/fragmentation, detachment/involvement in the pragmatic or syntactic mode (Chafe, 1985, op.cit.). Whether speech or writing is used on any particular occasion will depend on specific contextual circumstances. Scribner & Cole's research indicates that what matters in Vai society is not literacy as 'the ability to read and write' but the social practices into which people are apprenticed as part of a social group, whether as school students (English) or letter writers in the community (Vai script) or members of a religious group (Arabic) (Scribner & Cole, 1981, op.cit.). Degrees of explicitness vary from one cultural group to another as Givón (1979, op.cit.) shows and their use by any individual will depend upon his/her socialization into a group. It is Gee's view that the cumulative effect on literacy studies of these three pieces of empirically-based work is to move the focus from the psychological development of the individual to social and cultural practices (Gee, 1990 op.cit.).

## 5. A revised conceptualisation of oral-literate relations

The very wide-ranging claims made for literacy by Goody and Watt (1963, op.cit.), Goody (1977, op.cit.) Olson (1977, op.cit) and Ong (1982, op.cit.) are mostly non-empirically based, speculative generalisations; they have been challenged by accumulated detailed studies of specific societies, based on ethnographic or contemporary documentary evidence ( Street 1984, op.cit.; Graff 1979; Clanchy 1979,1993; Scribner & Cole 1981,op.cit.; Finnegan 1988). These studies provide more complex pictures of writing, print and oral communication and the interactions between them.

A modification of the oral-literate divide theory is suggested by Gough (1968) who compares the effects of literacy in India and China and in traditional Kerala. Noting the different ways in which literacy has been used in these cultures, she describes literacy as an enabling rather than a causal factor. It makes possible- but not inevitable- the development of syllogistic reasoning, scientific thought, a concept of history and complex social structures. Whether such developments take place in fact seems to depend on concomitant factors such as ecology, relations between and within societies and the ideological and social responses to these. This view pays attention to the qualities of literacy which are certainly different from those of orality and which the divide theorists have been so impressed by. As a communication technology, writing has the evident advantage over speech of visibility and permanence as long as the materials last. It permits the accumulation of records and the development of bureaucracy .

We can now be sure that there is no 'oral-literate divide', no sudden move from an oral to a literate culture, nor from an oral to a literate person. The

metaphor used to represent oral-literate relations needs to be changed to reflect both the independence and the inter-dependence of orality and literacy.

### 5.1 The ideological model of literacy

It is possible that thinking of literacy as a totally neutral technology is a way of disguising its social and ideological roots. An alternative, 'ideological' model of literacy stresses the social practices in which reading, writing, talking and listening are embedded, rather than the cognitive processes of the individual learner. This model accepts that, in any society, there will be multiple literacies, as there are in Vai society and that any literacy practice has consequences only as it acts together with many other social factors, including political and economic conditions and social structures, as well as other ideologies (Street 1984, op.cit.).

The study of specific societies is now expected to shed more light on oral - literate relations than earlier purely theoretical generalisations. There are, however, certain patterns or syndromes- continuities and repetitions- which can be discerned through history. These are the patterns of control, distribution and access to communication technologies. In studying literacy in any society, we need to know what communication technologies are available, how they are distributed, and who controls them, what kind of access individuals have to these technologies, what culturally generated values are placed on their mastery, what purposes they are used for and how they relate to the education and ranking systems of the society. The patterns are primarily social, economic and ideological, not technical (Finnegan,



1988 op.cit.). By confronting these issues, we can gain an understanding of the multiple literacies present in any society.

#### 5.1.1 An exemplification of the ideological model of literacy

The medieval period of manuscript culture provides evidence to support the ideological model of literacy. During this period, the uses of literacy and access to its technologies were tightly controlled by state and church for political and ideological reasons (see Chapter Two). After 1066, the Norman administration imposed a centralized bureaucracy on the indigenous population, in an attempt to establish rights to land in England. In doing this, they directly challenged oral procedures whereby, if disputes arose, the wisdom of elders and remembrancers was consulted. For many years, written documents were regarded with suspicion by the English because they were easily forged and were in Latin or Norman French, languages which most of them could not understand or read. Documents were often accompanied by tangible proofs of their provenance, such as seals, which would be accepted by the non-literate. It was also usual, for a long time, for an element of pre-literate practice, such as public proclamation, to be retained alongside a document. By such means, the use of documents very slowly permeated the whole of the society, where previously all knowledge of the past had been held in living memory (Clanchy 1979, op.cit.).

During the later medieval period, not only did the church have almost exclusive control over *who* learnt to read, it also exerted control over *what* might be read. The Christian message was to be mediated orally to congregations by their priests. The church forbade the reading of the bible by the lay public and, after the Synod of Toulouse, 1229, prevented its

translation into the vernacular. English people were not able to read the Bible in their own language until 1390, when the Lollard Bible was produced by the followers of Wycliffe, who were persecuted for it. There continued to be opposition to the idea of lay access to the scriptures up to the appearance of the Coverdale Bible in 1535, after the Reformation. (Levine 1986, op.cit.)

## 6. Discussion

These social practices, in which we see oral and literate modes entwined, provide answers to several of the questions raised by Finnegan (1988 op.cit. pp.121,122, above). Literate technology was imposed by the Norman invaders as a means of consolidating their power; it was to their advantage to impose a bureaucratic system which, in both language and format, was familiar to themselves and alien to the indigenous population. The implications of their actions were clearly understood and resented by the conquered people: in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle English scribes commented that, by making Domesday Book, William set his shameful mark on the humiliated people, even on their domestic animals (Clanchy 1993). The continued use of practices rooted in the oral culture ensured that, ultimately, written documents would, like the transfer of land ownership, be accepted but the process took 250 years. Church control of lay access to the Bible was occasioned by fear of alternative interpretation of its messages which might threaten the power of the church. Thus we see that literacy was inextricably embedded in issues of power and of political and ideological struggle. Gee supports Finnegan's views, commenting: *'The most striking certainty in the history of literacy is the way in which literacy has been used in age after age, to solidify the social hierarchy, empower elites and ensure that people*

*lower on the hierarchy accept the values, norms and beliefs of the elites even when it is not in their self-interest (or class interest) to do so.'* Gee (1990, op. cit.: 40).

In the medieval example cited, multiple literacies were clearly operating. Some people, like Geoffrey of Monmouth (see above, Chapter Three), could read and compose written texts in several different languages; humbler monks acted as scribes, taking down dictation; late in the period, even more lowly people carried texts which they could not decode without help but which they believed had the force of law because of a solemn spoken vow which had accompanied their purchase. All of these relations to written discourse can be counted as literacies.

The literature on which this chapter is based has provided theoretical backing for my historical account of oral-literate relations (Chapters Two and Three) and for the concept of multiple literacies operating in any society, whatever the dominant communication technology. It has shown how the autonomous model of literacy which does not include oral storytelling by pupils has been undermined by empirical research. However, as I have already observed, the autonomous model is implicit in the education system and assumed by teachers. The literature cited in the present chapter does not deal directly with this fact. I therefore shifted my research from theory pitched at the societal level to other work which focuses on the development of the individual, in order to understand how children learn to tell stories in the modern Western world and what part this activity plays in their personal development. These matters are discussed in Chapter Five.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### How Children Learn to Tell Stories and Enter the Discourses of Society

#### Introduction

This chapter foregrounds first young children and then 12/13 year olds; it is designed to answer the questions (p.30):

- *How do children learn to tell stories?*
- *What role does storytelling play in the personal development of children and young people?*

Drawing upon work in the fields of developmental linguistics and psychology, educational studies and literary theory, I describe the ontogeneses of language, of play, of narrative competence and literary competences. Secondly, I draw attention to the link between narrative and social identity and outline aspects of a theory of Discourses (Gee, 1990/1996) which embeds the narratives individuals tell and hear within interconnected social practices, highlighting issues of power and exclusion from power. Finally, I construct a fresh reading of Emma's telling of 'Virus Hit School' (p.27) in the light of Gee's theory.

#### 1. Early language learning

Since the early 1960s, studies of initial language learning have centred on the question of exactly how the process takes place and what relative importance

should be accorded to innate capabilities and to social learning. Whilst infants are totally dependent on adults for survival, the interpersonal and social aspects of communication clearly have vital importance. Since the tape-recorder and the video-recorder came into widespread use, the accumulation of empirical evidence of these aspects has accelerated and they have increasingly been viewed as predominant. Different issues have emerged, depending on the facet of language brought into focus (Wells 1981 op.cit.). I restrict this brief review to studies with a pragmatic or discursive emphasis.

### 1.1 Emphasis on the pragmatic and social base of language

The interpersonal and social aspects of language were explored in *Learning How to Mean* (Halliday 1975). This longitudinal study of one child's language learning directed attention away from the contexts of early words to the contexts of earlier experiences and the functions of pre-linguistic utterances. The child's parents attributed meanings to his earliest pre-linguistic utterances and Halliday devised a series of functional terms to describe the child's apparent pragmatic purposes. These were: instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative, informative. The functions emerged in roughly this order, as the child advanced from proto-language to speech approaching that of adults. The sequence confirms the importance of the inter-personal function of speech. Emphasis on the antecedents of language drew attention to the fact that most children between the ages of 1 year and eighteen months seem able to understand far more than they can express in language. Studies in this area (e.g. Bruner 1975) also showed that there is no sharp discontinuity in developmental progress from gesture to proto-language and on to structured expression (Wells 1981, op. cit).

## 1.2 Emphasis on discourse

### 1.2.1 Development of intersubjectivity

To be able to take part in discourse, infants must develop a sense of intersubjectivity, an understanding that the world they experience is similarly experienced by others and that their own communications will be interpreted as expressing intentions with respect to the shared world. Studies, using video-taped evidence of interactions between care-givers and infants, indicate the development of inter-subjectivity by the end of the first year of life (Schaffer 1971; Eimas et al 1971; Stern 1974; Scaife & Bruner 1975). The findings of these studies support the theory that much of infants' earliest learning is social in nature and that they are biologically adapted to behave in ways that will elicit opportunities for social learning (Schaffer 1977). Towards the end of the first year, an infant's interactions with another person can encompass their shared attention to an object in the environment; this is the essential pre-requisite for conversation (Trevarthen 1974; Trevarthen and Hubley 1978). Most children master deictic shifters such as 'I' and 'you' and 'here' and 'there' by the age of three, showing that, by then, they are able to take account of another's point of view (Bruner 1986).

### 1.2.2 Role of the adult care-giver

Numerous studies reveal the role of the adult care-giver in helping babies into language. It is the care-giver who, in interpreting a baby's gestures and vocalizations, attributes meaning to them (Halliday 1975, op.cit.) and

establishes patterns of interaction (proto-conversations). The care-giver is also the one responsible for introducing content into these events (Trevarthen 1974, op.cit.). From the start, language is present in all interactions. Through repetitious ritualised utterances, the adult allows the child to make connections between a situational context and the utterances spoken within it, provides opportunities for learning the structures of language and enables the child to correct errors in matching language to items and events in the situational context (Wells 1981, op. cit.). Longitudinal case studies show how young children gradually learn the reversibility of the roles of actor and recipient of an action in the context of playful collaboration with adults. Thus, dialogue is established first as reciprocal action, then as action and words and finally as interaction through language alone (Bruner 1975, op.cit.).

### 1.2.3 Studies of conversation

In the context of conversation with care-givers, growing children gradually come to master the forms and structures of the language of their homes. The large scale longitudinal study of language development carried out at Bristol University in the 1970s provides plentiful evidence of this, showing how children benefit

- through feedback from adults in response to their own communicative acts, allowing them to discover both their interpersonal and ideational meanings
- through the confirmation and development of those meanings in the form of actions and utterances which complete/extend them or encourage children to do likewise

- through the provision of model linguistic encodings which correspond to and help to define meanings they can derive from their own interpersonal and situational context.

This study stresses the importance of the role adults have in conversations with young children. The adult follows the child's conversational initiatives and checks and expands their meanings (Wells 1981, op. cit.). The account given by Wells accords with Vygotsky's argument that cultural systems, such as language, are transmitted from more mature to less mature members by a collaborative process of guided re-invention (Vygotsky 1978).

### 1.3 Discussion

Each new approach to early language learning made a distinct contribution to the understanding of how children enter the language of their community. The emphasis on pragmatics showed up the strength of their own purposes as they move from proto-language to language; the emphasis on discourse foregrounded the collaborative construction of inter-subjectivity; studies of conversation showed how they learn the forms and structures of the language of their community. The cumulative effect of these studies is to confirm that language learning is essentially an interpersonal, social and therefore cultural process (Vygotsky 1962, 1978 op.cit.). The studies quoted refer to children from mainstream homes in the Western world; work in non-mainstream and minority ethnic communities shows that, just as child-rearing practices are culturally variable, so are the ways in which children enter the language and other cultural systems of their communities (Heath 1982, 1983; Scollon and Scollon, 1981).



## 2. Learning to play

Imagination is thinking which summons up images of what is not present, the hypothesising and creative mental activity which cannot be separated from feelings, '*the dynamo of the brain*' (Smith 1992:53). I now trace the ways in which children develop imagination through learning to structure their feelings in early interactions with care-givers before they have language, through putting their own feelings into words when these emerge and through playing with the sounds and meanings of language. With reference to theories of play devised by Bateson, Piaget and Vygotsky, I then illustrate the principles which govern children's active make-believe play. Finally, I relate make-believe play to children's invented stories.

### 2.1 Learning to play in early interaction

In the context of caregiving routines, adults initiate and maintain quite early rhymes and play with fingers and toes, such as 'Round and round the garden' and 'This little pig went to market'. These are done for enjoyment and to provoke laughter. By such means, the child is introduced to many of the essentials of later symbolic play: the creation of an imaginary situation and the use of metaphor, rules and rituals, human intentionality and agency (Wells 1981 op.cit.; Urwin 1983).

### 2.2 Feelings into words

There is no doubting the strength of young children's feelings; before they learn adult language, they make them plain enough, as Halliday (1975, op. cit.)

shows. When their own words emerge, they are suffused with feeling. 'Tummy!' the two year old calls out in delight, when she spots a building worker stripped to the waist in the hot sunshine; 'door' she mourns tearfully when her mother goes out. When she realises that saying 'My story!' whilst holding a favourite book in front of a seated adult will lead to his reading that story to her every time she does it, she discovers the power of language to make things happen. Sometimes, in the effort to put what they feel into the limited language they have, children invent completely new words e.g. 'I monstered that towel', to describe roaring and making clawing movements at a towel hanging on the back of a door (Clark, 1983). In these ways, children begin to find a personal voice to express their own feelings in their own way (Heaney 1980).

### 2.3 Playing with the sounds and meanings of language

Young children will play with anything and so, when they have words, they play with those. Pre-sleep monologues exemplify phonological play with language which involves practising and breaking the rules of prosody and pronunciation (Weir, 1962). Play with meanings is evident in the creation of neologisms and of nonsense, as in the case of the two year old who, for fun, said her mother's name was 'chocolate' (Britton 1988). As they grow, children are likely to learn and then rearrange proverbs and formulaic sayings from the oral tradition both ancient and modern: 'The early bird catches the worm' becomes 'The early bird catches the boy friend', while the T.V. commercial jingle, 'You can't get quicker than a Quikfit fitter' becomes 'You can't get fitter than a babysitter'. In the school playground children learn subversive singing games which are often about taboos such as sex, birth and death, rude rhymes,

jokes and riddles passed around in the playground, out of the hearing of adults (Grugeon 1988). When they are read to and later, when they can read themselves, they enjoy nonsense poems by writers for children such as Michael Rosen. The popularity of such forms of play, which challenge what is socially accepted, lasts throughout life, as we see from the current pervasiveness of comedy on radio and T.V., in film and theatre. Such '*intellectual effrontery*' is educationally indispensable; it helps children to learn that language can say both what is true and what is untrue (Chukovsky 1963; Meek 1977, 1985: 48).

## 2.4 Theories of play

A young child learns language as part of socialisation, coming to know what counts as reality, commonsense and reason in her care-givers' culture (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, op.cit.). However, as I have shown, the culture does not determine what she knows and thinks. Biologically speaking, play is a necessary part of the adaptation which ensures survival of the organism. If play did not exist, '*life would then be an endless interchange of stylized messages, a game of rigid rules, unrelieved by change or humour*' (Bateson 1973: 193). Play seems to loosen up the rules of the systems of language and culture, the conventions of commonsense thinking and behaviour and so makes innovations possible.

### 2.4.1 Mastery and symbolism in play

During the early months of life, when a child is exploring her physical environment, her actions have the double function of accommodation to and assimilation of objects in the environment. For example, pushing a toy car

across the floor is a way of learning about its shape, size and way of moving and, at the same time, a way of learning the skill needed to grasp and propel it along. When she continues an action simply for the pleasure of doing it - pushing the car for the enjoyment of the noise the wheels make - then what she does is purely assimilative: she is engaging in play. To the extent to which an action is dissociated from immediate accommodation, it becomes a source of symbolic play and is the genesis of pretence. Now the child is reacting not to the physical situation in which she finds herself but to an *idea*. For example, she may lie down on the floor, holding a soft toy in the way she normally holds her blanket when she settles to sleep at night. Clutching the toy in exactly the 'right' way is the ritual which signals play. Symbolic play always creates an imaginary situation, includes rituals, is governed by rules and is done for pleasure; since it is assimilative, its achievement confers a sense of mastery (Piaget 1951).

#### 2.4.2 Symbolic play

Vygotsky maintains that make-believe play occurs at the point in a child's life when she longs for something that she cannot possibly have immediately; then she discovers that play can provide the '*illusory realization of unrealizable desires*.' She improvises an imaginary situation which enables her to escape the constraints of her real situation and enables her to relate her desires to a fictional 'I', that is to her role in the game and its rules. Paradoxically, within this alternative world the child generates rules which she has to obey and this she finds enjoyable. Obeying her self imposed rules, she exerts self-discipline and so exceeds in play her achievements in everyday life. The crucial importance of play to a child's development lies in its effect on thinking.

Young children cannot separate the field of meaning from the visual field and for them, action is provoked by objects. Thus, a door demands to be shut, a bell to be rung, a cupboard to be opened. In makebelieve play, the child pretends that things are other things; that a cardboard box is a car, for instance. In play, then, the meaning of an object is severed from the object itself, enabling the child to learn to use language which is not totally tied to the here and now and leading eventually to the development of imagination. Play is a transitional stage for the young child towards operating with meaning. It is the first manifestation of a child's emancipation from situational constraints (Vygotsky 1978, op.cit. : 89).

By the age of three years, children can move in and out of different discourse positions just as they can move in and out of real and imaginary situations, so, in social play they can take on roles which they have never taken in everyday life (Urwin, 1983, op. cit.). Even when they play alone, they engage in dialogue (Britton, 1977, op. cit.; Meek 1977, op.cit., 1985; Beardsley, 1988). An example from my experience provides an illustration:

A boy of six and his four-year-old sister play, repeatedly, a game they call 'Going Camping' . They have a large cardboard box for a car which they load with toys for luggage and blankets for tents. After a long 'drive' with sound effects, they spread the blankets over armchairs, clipping them together with clothes pegs, unload the toys and, after pretending to make and eat a meal, they usually lie down under the blankets and pretend to sleep. During the game, they assign roles, improvise the action and find their way to the inevitable ending: the dismantling of the camp and re-loading of the car. The whole of the action is set in an uninterrupted flow of dialogue.

These children were re-enacting their remembered experience of a recent camping holiday, pretending to be independent in a way they could not have been in reality. As they played, they took on the roles of their parents and sometimes of their fictional selves, moving easily from one discourse position to another. The rituals of loading, unloading and re-loading the car formed a framework for the whole and acted as boundaries of the imaginary world they entered whenever the game began. The rules of the game were generated by both children as it went along, as were the emotions appropriate to the action, although it was usually the older child who took the lead. This game was an instance of symbolic play, of acting in the light of ideas. Besides re-living experience, at the same time the children were contemplating their futures in 'deep play' in which they told themselves a story about themselves (Geertz, 1972).

## 2.5 Discussion

This second account reveals some parallels between language and the discourse of play: both are rule-governed systems which are socially learned and internalized by the learner. Both are also metaphoric: the words used to name objects in the environment are conventional and do not derive from the intrinsic qualities of those objects. In makebelieve play, imaginary situations, objects and roles are, similarly, conventions agreed by the players. 'Let's play mummies and daddies in the car!' (Britton, 1988, op.cit.). Young children use metaphors more than older people because they are still in the process of learning the conventions of the language and the culture. I was told of a three year old who caught sight of a man playing darts in a pub. She said, 'Why is

that man throwing flowers at that clock?' Thus she made sense of the unknown through the known.

Discussing makebelieve play, James Britton calls it '*a spectator role activity*' and likens it to daydreaming, to children's storytelling and to literature, all of which create alternative worlds and constitute assimilative activities in the 'spectator role'. The makers or receivers of the fantasy created are free, as they enter the fantasy world, to take into account their experience as a whole, since they are not occupied with any transactional activity (Britton 1971, op.cit. :41). Being able to give the whole of their attention to play may well be one reason why children do, as Vygotsky observed, exceed their normal capabilities when engaged in play.

### 3. Learning to tell stories

#### 3.1 Narrative and story

It is generally agreed that narrative is a sense-making process of the human mind, whereby experience is ordered along the dimension of time (Scholes 1974). Narrative is acknowledged to be a central function of language, learned very soon after the first stages of language learning; we know this because stories have been collected from children as young as two (Rosen 1985, op.cit.; Pitcher & Prelinger 1963). The sense-making process of narrative, storying, goes on throughout life but is particularly important to children because, for many years, it is the only form of discourse they have; other discourses, such as those of exposition and logical argument, which depend on the ability to handle abstract thought, develop later. Through narrative organisation, children sort

out their knowledge and ideas about the world, develop a sense of self, learn to separate inner from outer experience and become able to contemplate their futures, as we saw in the case of makebelieve play. Fantasy thinking is prominent in all such activities, as well as the recapitulation of past experience. Learning, as they grow, that language can say both what is and is not 'true', they can create fantasies which give shape and voice to their inner feelings and thoughts (Britton 1971, op.cit.; Moffett, 1973/1982; Meek et al., 1977, op.cit.). A story could be described as the finished linguistic product of the narrative process, using 'finished' both in the sense of completed and in the sense of shaped and polished. Psychologically, stories, which are ways of structuring thought and feeling, originate in the space between the shared world and the world of inner necessity, identified by the psychoanalyst Winnicott (1971) as 'the third area' of imagination, artistic activity and art, including literature (Britton 1971, op.cit.). A child's fantasy story is a safe way of trying out ideas about the world and oneself in it, since it brings together language, thought and feeling in a coherent pattern.

### 3.2 Learning narrative competences

As the work of Wells and his colleagues shows, children are helped very early to turn their own experiences into narratives. As they grow, they enter the ongoing conversation of everyday life where narratives form a large proportion of what they hear. Older people model for them the narrative ways of their culture, showing, for example, what sort of experiences are suitable for telling, how to signal the beginning of a story, how to structure it, how to end it and what sorts of stories produce particular responses from listeners (Wells 1981, op.cit.; Heath 1983, op.cit.; Rosen 1985, op.cit.).



Like learning to play, learning to participate in narrative discourse is a socio-cultural activity, vital to becoming a participant in the world's affairs. As they take part, children learn tacit narrative competences. Through conversation, they learn not just the rules of language and the rules of narrative but also the rules and norms of cultural behaviour and what counts as common sense in the culture they are growing up in. They become makers of hypotheses and makers of personal meanings, within the cultural value system. The culture does not determine what they learn, because they are individuals with their own strong feelings and desires (Meek, 1985). When children tell someone else stories of their own experience, they not only give cognitive and emotional coherence to that experience, they begin to adopt the role of onlooker towards their own lives as they do towards the stories they hear and the picture books they read. They fictionalize themselves as hero or victim in these stories, beginning to objectify their lives and fitting themselves in story into the cultural framework (Scollon & Scollon 1981, op.cit.; Fox 1993).

Children also invent and tell stories which create imaginary worlds, imaginary selves and imaginary sequences of events. Such stories, like episodes of makebelieve play, are paradoxical in that the one who enters the story world as teller or as listener is in a different place in imagination from the one he or she occupies bodily. Unlike makebelieve play, stories consist of words alone and therefore can be fairly described as forms of verbal symbolic play. Young children's own stories are metaphoric creations, they are constituted by the children's inner experiences, by their desire to construct other selves in story telling which come into existence through the facility of language to represent things metaphorically. Their narrative competences enable them to experience,

in play, the power they do not have in real life, since they can create and control the story world to suit themselves. When they have a listener (or even just a tape-recorder), they can feel they have power over him or her too (Fox 1993, op.cit.).

### 3.3 Learning literary competences

In order to read texts which are classed as fiction, we must acquire literary competences: '*a set of conventions for reading literary texts*' (Culler 1975: 118). In *How Texts Teach What Readers Learn* (1988), Margaret Meek develops a theory of the ontogenesis of literary competences, based on her belief in the primacy of narrative for learning to read and the understanding that we learn to read by reading (Smith, 1973). She argues that story books made for children by modern authors and artists, such as Shirley Hughes and Maurice Sendak, combine pictures and text in ways which offer them serious reading lessons. Through repeated readings of favourite books like these, children learn:

- that storytexts are dialogic. There is always a teller (addressor) and a told (addressee). The child must learn to become both the teller, picking up the view and the voice of the author and the told, the recipient of the story. This understanding is facilitated by the reading adult who takes the part of the author;
- that stories are polysemic texts. Each reading of the same story reveals more, for example, inter-textual references;

- that words mean more than they say, as in metaphor, puns and irony;
- that there are different kinds of stories where different conventions obtain. In the fairytale, transformations happen by magic whereas in a realistic story, events are more likely to be governed by logic. Different stories have, in effect, different rules (Meek, 1988, op.cit.).

### 3.3.2 Empirical evidence of literary competences in young children

*At the Very Edge of the Forest* (Fox 1993, op.cit.) offers evidence of the validity of Meek's theory. It describes an empirical study of the improvised spontaneous oral narratives of five young children, between the ages of four and six years, none of whom was an independent reader but all of whom had had a rich experience of stories read and told to them by their parents. In telling their own invented stories, the children demonstrated not only narrative competence which they had learnt as a normal part of language learning but also tacit literary competences, acquired from their experience of listening to stories. These competences fit Meek's descriptions:

- The children became the teller and the told by summoning up their imaginary listeners, mirror-images of themselves, whom they addressed as 'you'; in this way, they made their monologues dialogic. This competence was particularly noticeable in the two oldest children whose varied uses of narrator function and point of view were susceptible to analysis according to categories based on post-structuralist poetics (Barthes 1970; Genette 1980);

- they took strands from stories and films they knew and from their own life experience to create polysemic compositions, using language that was both conversationally communicative and complex in ways resembling written text;
- since the children's stories were not retailings of personal experiences but invented fantasies, they expressed personal meanings in disguised metaphorical form. Fox explains this power as follows: the children enjoyed repeated readings of favourite stories, a process which provided the same sort of satisfactions as play activities. The satisfactions included recognising that the stories told, in disguised form, of things the children knew to be deeply true about their own lives. When they came to make up their own stories, they reproduced the metaphorical processes that were meaningful to them in the reception of the stories they had enjoyed;
- the children's invented stories were, in most cases, dominated by the conventions of the oral tradition such as the rule of three and magical transformations, frequently used by writers of books for young children. The two older children also used other narrative discourse forms, including poetry, news broadcasts and weather forecasts and showed some understanding of their different dominant conventions.

### 3.4 Discussion

Despite obvious differences, particularly the ages of the storytellers and the contexts of their tellings, Fox's study is relevant to my own investigation. In 'Virus Hit School' Emma created an imaginary world and an imaginary

sequence of events, involving her imaginary self and representations of her class-mates and teachers. Her story was a metaphoric creation constituted by her inner experience, involving her thoughts about relationships between pupils and teachers in school and about school as a place to live safely. As she shared confidences with her imaginary listener, Emma showed she was tacitly aware that storytelling is a dialogic process. On one level, her narrative is a kind of comic horror story, owing much to filmed versions of 'Dracula' and, on another, it is a serious comparison of school and home; thus, it is polysemic. Using the conventions of fairytale, 'Virus Hit School' contains a series of magical transformations followed by their reversals; it can be regarded as an instance of the continuity of deep verbal symbolic play (Geertz, 1972, op.cit.) beyond early childhood.

Fox describes her children telling their stories as *'playing themselves into the discourses of literature and literacy'* (Fox, 1993 op.cit. : ix ). Through their orally mediated experience of written literature, they confirmed Margaret Meek's belief in the primacy of narrative and experience of literature in learning to read. When their progress in school at the age of seven was checked, all were reported by their teachers to be reading in advance of their chronological age. Emma had been judged at age eleven by her primary school to be failing to read independently; at twelve, in secondary school, she was regarded by her reading teacher as not progressing in this respect. Yet, in her oral story she appeared to be playing herself into the discourse of literature. In the light of Street's ideological model of literacy (see Chapter Four), Emma was also playing herself into a modern literacy. Unfortunately, her literacy was not recognised by her school, since she did not demonstrate her competences in the expected, written, mode (Meek 1991, op.cit.).

#### 4. Taking the wider view: Discourses, identity and power

##### 4.1 Narrative and social identity

Narrative is a central function of language (Hymes, 1975) which becomes central in children's thinking and speaking at a very early stage (Halliday, 1976a, op.cit.; Scollon & Scollon, 1976, op.cit.). The earliest stories they are helped to construct are not only ways of making sense of experience but also ways of presenting themselves to others, a process which goes on throughout life (Goffman, 1974). In Western society, as children grow, they accumulate unique collections of stories: stories of personal experience, of family and community, jokes, anecdotes perhaps traditional stories and stories from books and films. Endlessly told and re-told with continual modifications in the telling, these narratives remain vital to the individual's sense of self-definition. '*..we can readily conceive of ourselves as deprived of all sorts of cultural resources....but strip us of all the accumulation of stories heard and told, reported and invented, traditional and spontaneous, and what is left of us?*' (Rosen, 1984,op.cit.: 8). Rosen's statement from an educational perspective, connects with the views of both Halliday, a systemic linguist and Bauman, a linguistically-oriented folklorist (Halliday 1976, op.cit.;Bauman, 1986, op.cit.). The importance of discourse patterns to social identity within cultural groups has also been established by ethnographic research: people feel they are what they are, not only because of the stories they can tell, but also because of the 'ways of telling' they learn, along with language, during early enculturation (Scollon & Scollon, 1981, op.cit.)

## 4.2. Gee's Theory of Discourses

In recent years, there has been a general increase in the number of studies of literacy and a shift from work based on the assumption that literacy is a neutral technical skill to work which conceptualizes it as an '*ideological practice, implicated in power relations and embedded in specific cultural meanings and practices*' (Street 1995: 1). This shift has led to the establishment of the new literacy studies (Gee 1990; Street 1993 a & b), now re-named socioliteracy studies (Gee 1996), a cross-disciplinary field drawing upon linguistics, anthropology and education studies. Within this field, bringing together insights derived from Goffman (1974, op.cit.), Scollon & Scollon (1981, op.cit.), Heath (1983, op.cit.), and from the works of Bourdieu and Foucault, James Paul Gee has developed a theory of Discourses. I now sketch those aspects of his theory which are relevant to the present enquiry, namely: a definition of Discourses; the acquisition of primary and secondary Discourses and social identities; the boundaries and relations between different Discourses; Discourses and power and Discourses and literacies. (The capital D is used by Gee to make the term as he defines it distinctive) (Gee 1990 op.cit., 1996, op.cit.).

### 4.2.1 A definition of Discourses

In this theory, language in use is seen as inseparable from the social practices in which it is embedded. Discourses are not simply ways of using language but are described as ways of living or '*integral combinations of sayings-doings-thinkings-feelings-valuings*', shared by groupings of individuals (Gee, 1990: xv). They provide people with social identities and roles which can be seen as ways of displaying membership of a 'club'. They are acquired by individuals, like

language, mostly through apprenticeship to others already experienced in the Discourse concerned.

#### 4.2.2 The acquisition of Discourses and social identities

Gee distinguishes primary from secondary Discourses. Primary Discourse is the Discourse of intimates acquired by individuals in the context of home and family, especially in the early years of life. Their primary Discourse provides individuals with a basic sense of social identity or personal persona, beliefs and values; like their native language, it will remain with them throughout life, acting as a framework or base for learning other Discourses. The ontogeneses of language, play, narrative and literary competences discussed in this chapter are, we must assume, part of the process of an individual's acquisition of his or her primary Discourse.

Secondary Discourses are acquired in the context of secondary institutions, such as shops and nurseries (community-based Discourses) and schools, or law courts (public sphere Discourses). Gee envisages the two kinds of secondary Discourses as standing on the same continuum, shading into one another. For example, the Discourse of the local police station will be community-based but, since that station is a law-enforcement centre, it will also have characteristics of the Discourse of the legal system which applies across the U.K. Crucially, secondary Discourses involve one in interaction with people with whom one is not intimate; they provide individuals with additional social identities. During their lives, adults acquire multiple secondary Discourses and therefore multiple identities; they are likely to experience tension between these different identities out of which their public persona will be constituted. As they grow up, young people, become



apprentices in numerous secondary discourses simultaneously. Thus, a twelve year old boy, for example, could be acquiring not only the public-sphere secondary Discourses of education and of all the academic subjects on the school timetable: Science, Geography, Design and so forth, but also the secondary Discourses of football fans, of computer games enthusiasts, of the wearers of teenage designer fashion.

#### 4.2.3 The boundaries of and relations between different Discourses

Although, in Gee's theory, Discourses are seen as separate from one another, the boundaries between them are not seen as fixed and impermeable but rather as porous, permitting material to filter from one into another, in either direction. The process is similar to the way different languages interfere with one another and grammatical features sometimes pass between them. Filtering takes place between all kinds of Discourses. Community-based secondary Discourses do not simply operate within buildings which belong to the institutions to which they are attached (e.g. schools, churches). In the U.S.A., the Discourse of the black evangelical church filters into the primary Discourses of the homes of many African-Americans, whilst the Discourse of fundamentalist religion often filters into the primary Discourses of white working-class families (Heath 1982 op.cit., 1983, op. cit.). In similar ways, the dominant Discourses of schools (e.g. the secondary Discourse of book reading, or of essayist literacy (Olson, 1983, op.cit., Street, 1984, op.cit.) filter into the primary Discourses of some middle-class mainstream homes. Where this happens, the enculturation of children in those homes is likely to be strongly influenced by the secondary Discourse concerned.

#### 4.2.4 Discourses and power

Discourses always include viewpoints, sometimes a more generalised theory (an ideology) about the distribution of social 'goods' ('goods' include status, worth, possessions, careers, in short, anything that members of the Discourse think it is good to have). These viewpoints and theories include opinions on who qualifies as a member of the Discourse and who does not, who is an 'insider' and who an 'outsider'. Those who move too far away from behaviour which most members think of as 'normal' or 'appropriate' to the Discourse, are regarded as moving into another Discourse. Some Discourses impose tests to determine who is a member and who is not. The public-sphere secondary Discourses of the education system are used in this way through the public examination system, which acts as a form of gate-keeping, deciding which pupils and how many of them will proceed to higher education and the possibility of enhanced opportunities in later life.

Mastery of some Discourses leads to the acquisition of social power; these are 'dominant Discourses' which often empower those groups who experience least conflict with their other Discourses, when they use them. For example, a young girl who has become familiar with books and reading as part of her primary Discourse is at an advantage when she goes to school, compared with children who have not had such experiences, because book-related activities are central to the dominant Discourse of the education system. Having a sure start in the school context, she will be seen by teachers, early in her school career, as a potentially successful pupil. Therefore it is likely that she will develop a positive view of herself in school and so have a very good chance of being successful there. Mastery of the dominant Discourse of the education system is likely to facilitate entry to higher education and so to valued employment opportunities. This view is

confirmed by the longitudinal research on language development carried out by Wells (1986, op.cit.).

#### 4.2.5 Discourses and literacies

Within Discourses theory, reading and writing have to be seen as social practices embedded within others. Since each individual acquires one Discourse, their primary Discourse, as part of initial enculturation, literacy can be defined as '*the mastery of a secondary Discourse*' (Gee, 1996:143). This means that, in order to operate in social groups beyond the immediate family, individuals must acquire the Discourse, the '*integral combination of sayings-doings-thinkings-feelings-valuings*' of those who are already members of such groups (Gee, 1990: xv, op.cit.) and they must be able to take on the social identity which goes with the secondary Discourse concerned. Since adults usually acquire multiple secondary Discourses and identities, they also acquire multiple literacies. Literacies become *liberating* or powerful *literacies* if they can be used as ways of critiquing another Discourse, i.e. if they function as meta-languages or meta-Discourses.

#### 4.2.6 Discussion

I have omitted part of Gee's theory and constructed a rather condensed account of the aspects I have covered; as a result, the theory may appear to oversimplify matters which are exceedingly complex in life. For example, it is difficult to write about Discourses without seeming to make them into compelling forces which exist outside individuals (Elias 1970 tr.1977). It may seem, in my account, as if Gee is guilty of such reification; it is certainly true that he writes of Discourses arguing with one another and of individuals as the

sites of such arguments. Nevertheless, he does insist, quite explicitly, that Discourses are simply integrations of human acts and that social life is composed of innumerable acts by individuals. His conceptualisation of Discourses derives in part from Goffman (1959, 1967, 1981) whose theory has been criticised by Giddens (1984) on the grounds that it emphasises the 'given' character of roles, thereby expressing the dualism of social action and structure (as though the stage were set by the Discourse, the script written, the props provided and all the actor has to do is play the role). Gee explicitly accepts this criticism, favouring the view that the relationships between individuals and Discourses are dialectical. That is: individuals are constituted by their Discourses, which they also constitute. Since Gee stresses throughout that Discourses are acquired by individuals through apprenticeship in a social context, it is apparent that he does not believe in the sort of separation of the individual and the social that Elias objects to (Gee 1990, op.cit., 1996 op.cit.).

##### 5. An application of Gee's theory of Discourses

I now illustrate Gee's theory by applying it to the narrative event in which Emma told her story, 'Virus Hit School' (p.15). Her performance took place in a secondary school English lesson, an arena where numerous different secondary Discourses come into play, including those of education, of subject English and of literature. These are all public-sphere Discourses, where written modes are central and the ability to use them independently is highly valued; they are dominant Discourses in the institutional context of the secondary school. Pupils aged 12/13 came to this classroom equipped with their primary Discourses and identities and with elements of the many secondary Discourses and identities they were in the process of acquiring.

Emma was not a confident independent reader or writer. She was, at the time, excluded from French lessons, serving instead an apprenticeship in the Discourse of 'extra English', often seen as a low status sub-Discourse of the Discourse of subject English. Partly as a result of this and partly because of her poor attendance record, she was perceived by her teacher, by the other pupils and no doubt in some way by herself, as marginal to life in the English classroom, not a full 'insider'.

### 5.1 The dialectical relationship between individual and Discourse

Gee maintains that Discourses are constituted by the acts of individuals whose social identities are themselves constituted by those Discourses; it is through the cumulative idiosyncratic acts of individuals in Discourses that, over time, Discourses become changed. A close-up of Emma's telling shows how this dialectical process can occur. During the lesson in question, she used materials provided by her teacher (audio-tape, tape-recorder, and her memory of a resources booklet) and worked alone, unobtrusively, so that she would have appeared, to the casual observer, to be in the conventional apprentice-role within the English classroom, like the other pupils. However, she was, in fact, using the materials she had been given in unconventional ways: instead of recording a role-playing interview, she used the recorder as a way of calling up a listener to tell a story to; instead of working on the non-narrative writing tasks set in the resources booklet, she composed a lengthy oral fiction. Her solitary behaviour went against the grain of the lesson as conceived of by her teacher, since she was using her oral narrative competences, achieved largely within her primary Discourse, her out-of school Discourse, in a lesson in school. She thus made a change in the Discourse of English lessons which meant that oral

narrative became, at least on that occasion, just as acceptable as written narrative would have been. It is possible to construe Emma's behaviour as an act of liberating literacy, based on reflection, possibly triggered by her position as a marginal member of the class who felt that she had something important to say but that she was being asked for the wrong kind of product. Such behaviour by a virtual outsider was an indication of unusual confidence and it indicates the strength of Emma's wish to create her own story and insert it into the life of the classroom. Her successful telling and the praise she subsequently received from her teacher on account of it, changed her social identity as a learner in English lessons, for a short time. (I should add that none of this could have happened if her teacher had maintained a rigid insistence on precise conformity to her own lesson plan).

## 5.2 Oral storytelling as a literacy practice in relation to texts

Gee defines literacy as gaining fluent control of a secondary Discourse. I believe that, although Emma used the oral mode throughout, she was, nevertheless, showing that she could handle elements of the dominant Discourses of the English classroom in which reading and writing feature prominently. She was, for example, using narrative compositional skills which could be equally effective in written narrative, e.g. in sequencing a series of episodes and dramatising her story through the use of direct speech. Further, beside taking on board the narrative outline suggested by the resources booklet she also used images and ideas from scripted films, in particular 'Dracula', which she had seen on T.V. Thus, she was utilising material derived from written sources and combining it with both remembered experience and invented fantasy to create a complex text. Clearly, some elements of the

dominant Discourses, though not independent reading, had already filtered into her primary Discourse via film on T.V. The use of imagination, the driving force of her composition, must have been rooted in experiences of play like those described above. Like the younger storytellers described by Fox (1993, op.cit.), she was engaged in a form of verbal symbolic play, playing herself into the discourses of literature and literacy.

### 5.3 The expression of ideology in an oral story

Gee maintains that Discourses are inherently ideological, including, as they do, values and viewpoints about relationships between people and the distribution of social goods. In 'Virus Hit School', where school becomes a prison with monsters on the loose, Emma takes a clearly critical stance towards authority and demonstrates how, if it were left to the pupils, specifically to the girls, school could be transformed into a homely comfortable place. Her strongest mockery is reserved for the powerful male hierarchy of the fictional school setting of her story. Thus it is clear that she has views about gender and power relations which her story conveys through the socially safe form of fiction.

### 5.4 Discussion

Gee's theory of Discourses can be seen as a valuable metaphor, a fleshing out of Hymes's concept of 'language in use' (Hymes, 1964), integrating ways of speaking, including narrative, with other social acts. The metaphor can be said to reflect, in some measure at least, the way we experience language and narrative as inseparable parts of life, crucial to our social identity. The use of this theory to describe Emma's performance enables its multiple connections to the wider social

context to be perceived. In this reading, Emma's confident choice of oral narrative, a strength derived from her primary Discourse, suggests that oral storytelling should be part of the normal work of the English classroom for all pupils in secondary schools. It would help those who have not been advantaged by involvement with book reading in their homes since all have oral narrative competences which they use in their everyday lives; displaying those competences in a performance situation could boost their self confidence. It would also enrich the work of those pupils who are already independent readers when they enter the secondary school, by opening up the heritage of the oral tradition, which is so often neglected in a curriculum dominated by the written mode. The lack of recognition within the education system of the importance of the oral narrative mode, in which all primary Discourses are rooted, can be said to constitute an educational loss to all pupils.

The exploration of diachronic and synchronic perspectives on storytelling using the theories brought together in this chapter has enabled me to answer the questions set out at the beginning. Children learn language and the discourses of play, narrative and story in social contexts as part of their primary Discourse. The stories they gather and tell are integral to their development, constituting their sense of personal and social identity. If teachers were to encourage oral storytelling by pupils in the secondary English classroom, it would mean that the educational system valued both their stories and themselves.



## **PART TWO: EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES**

## CHAPTER SIX:

### The Multiple Contexts of the Empirical Inquiry and the Working Hypothesis

#### Introduction

This chapter recalls what has been learnt from the review of relevant literature in Part One and restates the two questions from p. 30 unanswered by that review. These questions are addressed by the empirical inquiry described in Part Two. The chapter then gives an account of the multiple contexts of the empirical inquiry and the working hypothesis on which it was based.

#### 1. What has been learnt from Part One

The authorities referred to in Chapters Two to Five answered my questions about the historical dimension of stories and storytelling, at societal and individual levels. Chapters Two and Three showed that, for at least 1,000 years, people in Britain have interpreted and communicated human experience in symbolic narrative forms, using spoken language, that a succession of other technologies of communication involving the written word have been used for the same purpose and that some stories have constantly passed between speech and writing, in both directions. Throughout the centuries, the oral thread of story, usually invisible to later commentators, has provided continuity. At the personal level, Emma's oral composition, 'Virus Hit School' (p.27) which includes material from scripted film, can be said to illuminate this account. Chapter Four explained why the educational system does not treat oral and written

narrative in the same way. The autonomous model of literacy is generally implicit in the system and the ideological model (Street, 1984,op.cit.), which sees reading/listening and writing/talking as always embedded in social practices and assumes the presence of multiple literacies in all societies, does not at present guide secondary classroom practice in subject English, nor the National Curriculum and G.C.S.E. requirements for English. Consequently, the concepts of the oral-literate divide and the inferiority of the oral mode to the literate are usually regarded as obvious common sense in these contexts. The move to the ideological model of literacy appears to be confined largely to researchers in the field of socio-literacy studies and related academic disciplines. Chapter Five showed that the social history outlined in Chapter Two is repeated in the life of each individual who enters the world of written narratives from a base of prior and enduring orally mediated social experience. It also made clear that the individual's sense of personal and social identity is integral to the experience.

The historical perspective has shown that struggles over voice (getting a hearing for one's own interpretation of life) and socialization (teaching/learning social behaviour within existing norms and values) have been central to the history of story-telling in Britain. The application of Gee's Discourses theory (Chapter Five) indicates that such struggles are also a feature of classroom work today. The dissonance between Emma's performance and her teachers' expectations is a modern example of such struggles.

## 2. The questions which remain unanswered

- *Are there strengths of pupils' oral language that are being ignored in the secondary English curriculum?*
- *What can teachers learn from a 12/13 year old, who persistently avoids writing and yet is able to compose complex stories orally?*

Fox (1993, op.cit.) shows how young children can connect with the oral tradition through having illustrated story books read to them at home before they can read independently, then telling their own stories and thus becoming part of the 'chain of speech communion' as I felt Emma did (Bakhtin, 1986, op.cit.). However, I have found no account of older children and young people doing this in the school context. Consequently, in order to provide answers to these two questions I made an ethnographic study of a secondary English classroom where 12/13 year olds told oral stories.

## 3. The multiple contexts of the empirical inquiry

The empirical inquiry took place during the school year, 1983-4, in a community college situated in the SE Midlands of England, roughly 11 miles from the nearest city. The college, a co-educational, first-tier comprehensive school for 11-14 year olds, opened in 1976. In 1983, it drew its pupils from a primary school on the same campus, from another in the same village and from two others in nearby villages. During the inquiry, I acted as participant-observer in the English classroom of a

colleague who was teaching a second year (Year 8) class. I knew the class concerned, having been their English teacher myself in the previous year.

### 3.1. The catchment area

The appearance of the college catchment area and the working patterns of its population have been transformed since the beginning of the century. Before the first world war, all the villages consisted of a few farms and farm-labourers' cottages, clustered around a church; most people worked on the land. From the 1920's onwards these places became industrial villages linked by a railway line; small factories produced shoes, knitwear and cardboard boxes, employing a local work force. After the second world war, a multi-national electronics firm established a large base in the area, providing more jobs for local people and drawing skilled people from further afield to swell the local population.

After the closing down of the railway lines following the second world war, local light industry disappeared or went into decline; in the early 80's the electronics operation shrank and there were many redundancies. By 1983, many local people were travelling to work at motorway service stations and out-of-town hypermarkets; others were commuting to the city and to other small towns; others were working in local service industries. A small minority of families continued to run small dairy or beef farms, market gardens and garden centres. In 1983, housing in the villages consisted of a small core of traditional cottages and terraces, surrounded by estates of semi-detached houses built by the local authority between the wars or in the '60's and now owned, in many cases, by their occupants. Others were privately owned 'first-time buyer' or 'executive' homes, built

in the early '80's on land sold by local farmers to construction companies. Despite the important changes that had taken place in patterns of living and working in the area, there had not been comparable changes in the ethnic composition of the population. One's impression was of a strongly rooted, largely monocultural, community.

### 3.2 The college in relation to the catchment area

As a member of the teaching staff, I realised that many people in the area felt a strong attachment to the community college. There were several reasons for this. The college provided employment for local people as caretakers, secretarial, canteen and other ancillary staff, many of whom were also parents/grandparents of pupils at the college and therefore took extra pride in its achievements and appearance. The college was also a focus for social activity in the area, since there was a shortage of other accessible leisure facilities and poor public transport in the evenings. The building was heavily used as a venue for youth clubs and youth organisations, for concerts, plays, wedding receptions and other community events. There were classes for adults in the evenings and some during the day, as well as a daily creche, a weekly lunch club for the elderly and a licensed bar open in the evening. In these different ways, the college acted as a focus and resource for the cultural life of the community it served and therefore was integral to it.

### 3.3 The ethos of the college

The atmosphere in the college was usually ordered but relaxed. There were few explicitly stated rules; instead, there was a code of conduct which

stressed care for other people and for the environment. Prominent displays of pupils' work around the building made it clear how much this was valued. Staff made a conscious effort to deal with problems of control by negotiation and there was a tradition of openness and co operation amongst them. I do not wish to give the impression that this was a utopian institution; there was bullying and prejudice, as in any school. It was easy for teaching staff to assume a level of racial tolerance amongst the pupils which did not, in fact, exist. Occasionally, automatic, unthinking racism would surface, usually when discussion turned to the large Ugandan Asian population which had settled in the city in recent decades. In this respect, some pupils could be described as voicing the bigoted views of older people in their community. Luckily, within the college, pupils had regular informal contacts with people from different age groups and people with different expectations of life from their own. (Under fives and pensioners all appeared within the college each week, as well as visiting parties of students with learning difficulties and older teenagers doing community service). Thus, there were opportunities for pupils to be helped to question values which they took to be axiomatic.

### 3.4 The classroom

The classroom used by the class and teacher involved in the inquiry was a large open area which, at registration times, housed three tutor groups of 20-24 pupils each. During lesson time there would occasionally be two classes housed in this space but, at the time of the inquiry, when second year English was timetabled, there was only one. Thus, there was plenty of space for the formica-topped tables which were usually grouped in pairs, allowing four pupils to sit together. The habit in the English department

was to draw pupils together at the beginning of the lesson into a seated circle or group for the introduction, later sending them back to their tables to work individually or in pairs or small groups. The room had plenty of notice boards for displays of pupils' work and power-points for tape-recorders; it was next to the college Resources Centre where books and equipment such as tape recorders, T.V. sets, audio and video tapes could be borrowed. At the beginning of the inquiry, there was no video-camera available and only two computers which were situated in the Maths and Science areas.

### 3.5 The teacher

Mrs B. is a music specialist who, at the time of this inquiry, had worked at the college for seven years; this was her first teaching post. Beside her classroom work in Music and English, she did some individual instrumental teaching, ran a choir, worked with instrumental ensembles after school and was musical director of college drama productions. Like her Music teaching, Mrs B's English teaching was essentially geared to active learning by the pupils.

### 3.6 The pupils

My focus is on young people moving from childhood into adolescence. In their thinking, such young people are moving out of the stage of concrete operations and into the stage of formal operations, developing hypothetico-deductive reasoning (Piaget & Inhelder, 1958). They are developing the ability to use imagination freely, playing without needing to be physically active at the same time (Vygotsky, 1978, op.cit.) and, in their own narratives, they are beginning



to think of taking on adult roles, fantasising about the world (Meek et al.,1977, op.cit.). The physical, emotional and cultural changes associated with becoming a teenager in our society draw 12 and 13 year olds together as a group and at the same time render them more sensitive about their relationships with one another.

Both economically and culturally, the pupil population appeared to be a fairly homogeneous group. The majority were well dressed and well nourished. Most of them received pocket money - often from grandparents as well as parents - and could afford to keep up with teenage fashions. Many of them had jobs, either delivering newspapers, baby-sitting or doing certain kinds of farmwork, for which they were paid. A sizeable minority certainly managed to save up and take part in trips - French exchange, skiing, camping - organised by staff each year. There was a minority of children who had free dinners, but none who appeared to be very wealthy. A bi-lingual pupil was a rarity. The very few non-white pupils were of mixed race or had been adopted or fostered by white families.

In line with national trends, increasing numbers of pupils at the college were living in one-parent families or with step-parents, some having experienced several family upheavals. However, many of the them had an extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins living nearby; it was not unusual to find three, even four, generations of the same family living within a stone's throw of one another. Thus, teenagers who were in difficulty at home were likely to be helped and supported by other relatives.

### 3.7 The class

At the time of the inquiry, the second year class concerned, like all the English classes in the college, was a mixed ability group drawn from four 'vertical' tutor groups (groups containing 1st, 2nd and 3rd year pupils who remain with the same tutor, for administrative and social purposes, for three years). I began my work as participant-observer when the class was four weeks into the school year. Because of staffing changes, the class was being taught in several subjects by teachers who had not worked with them before, some of whom were new to the school. I took the opportunity to ask these teachers in the staff room how they found the class. They described it as 'difficult to hold together' because of its 'unusually wide spread of ability'. Several teachers mentioned 'dominant girls' who were sometimes difficult to motivate; some were concerned about three individuals: Dean, Steven and Emma. There had been some bullying and disputes about property. To convey the 'feel' of the class, I now describe the usual friendship groupings which I noted in September, 1983. My comments come from field notes made early in the new school year and include some memories from the previous year. I give most detail about those pupils whose work is foregrounded in Part Two.

### 3.7.1 Karen, Keeley, Annmarie, Gaynor, Louise, Joanne

Karen was the outstanding athlete of the year and Keeley performed regularly with a local dance troupe. Both were confident people and commanded the respect and admiration of the other four. Although she was not a talented performer in the same way, Annmarie was also a self-confident person. Gaynor, Louise and Joanne were usually in the roles of cooperative followers in this group.

### 3.7.2 Shelley, Tricia, Tracey, Sarah, Kate, Paula

Shelley and Tricia were, like Karen and Keeley, capable of drive and organisation when working in a group; they were careful to observe the school's conventions. Shelley was the ideas-woman of the group. During the first year, she had been responsible for the improvisation of several stories and for persuading others to dramatise them on tape. Tracey and Kate started the year lacking confidence, sheltering behind the others, often seeking reassurance from them or from their teachers; both worked hard. Sarah was the clown of the group, inclined to be giggly. Paula had a very poor attendance record and, when in school, was virtually silent.

### 3.7.3 Gary and Paul

A duo who did not mix much with the others. Gary was very anxious to please teachers, always handing his homework in on time. Paul was a very shy boy who was often teased, sometimes cruelly, by Dean.

#### 3.7.4 James, Jeremy, Michael, Chris

Jeremy, Michael and Chris had a friendship based on shared interests. During their first year, (1982, the year of the Falklands war) Jeremy and Michael had been very interested in nuclear power, nuclear weapons and nuclear war. At the beginning of the second year, science fiction, science fantasy, computer games and role-playing games were added as they got to know Chris. better (he had been a late arrival in the first year). Jeremy and Chris both achieved good marks in Maths and Science though Michael was described as lazy, by his Science teacher. Jeremy and Chris were both taller and physically more mature than most of the other boys; unlike Paul, they were never taunted by Dean. James was the hanger-on in this group. He admired and was impressed by the other three and would try to take on their ideas, sometimes without fully understanding them. When this happened, they would grow impatient with what they saw as his childishness. Then, James would attach himself to a different group - sometimes a group of girls - for a while.

#### 3.7.5 Magnus, Graham

These two boys would always sit together in class but were not particular friends outside. Graham was a lively, popular character, keen on football, both playing it and watching it. Magnus a more stolid individual, was a farmer's son, very interested in anything to do with the countryside: farming, trapping and shooting animals. Neither of the two was over-keen on working hard in school.

### 3.7.6 Emma, Dean and Steven

These three have to be described as individuals; they were not perceived as belonging to any of the groups described. Emma seemed to her teachers to be immature, compared with the other girls in the class. She had arrived from primary school with a strong recommendation that she receive remedial help in reading. As a result, she had been withdrawn from French lessons in the first year, to do 'Extra English' with the Remedial teacher in the Reading Room. Some of the pupils I have described would work with her at the instigation of a teacher but such contacts never seemed to become friendships. I learned from Emma that she and Louise sometimes played together at home, because they lived near one another, but Louise kept quiet about this in school. At the beginning of the second year, although she had made a friend in another class, Emma's attendance record was extremely poor, as it had been throughout the first year. Dean, like Emma, seemed immature and unable to form any lasting friendships. He did not concentrate on work in class, remaining on the fringes of any activity. Sometimes, he attracted attention by teasing or hitting some inoffensive person, such as Paul or Emma. Sometimes he attached himself to Karen or Louise but usually avoided the other boys. He responded well to a teacher's undivided attention. Steven, too, was perceived as immature and restless by most of his teachers. Before the end of the Autumn Term, 1983, he was removed from the class because his tutor wanted him to be separated from Dean. Thus, he is not referred to in this inquiry after that point.

### 3.8 The second year English curriculum

The pupils had three lessons of English per week; each lesson was one hour and ten minutes long. Within this allocation of time, Mrs. B. followed the pattern of work usual in the English department at the time; this entailed relating all oral and written work more or less closely to a particular focus of interest, which could be either literary or thematic. Work was planned in units expected to cover a certain number of weeks (usually 4 or 6), but planned patterns did not remain totally rigid in practice. A conscious effort was made to integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening in each unit of work. Thus, for example, a unit on Private Reading could begin with pupils giving short talks to the class on books they had enjoyed, reading aloud one or two highlights; these talks would then be written up and placed in a class folder of Book Reviews which anyone who wanted a book to read could consult before using the library. A copy of such a review would also be kept in a pupil's personal folder. Pieces of writing were usually started in class and completed for homework.

### 4. The working hypothesis on which the empirical inquiry is based

*The fact that most children learn to use face-to-face oral narrative as part of their primary Discourse, that they develop it further in social interaction and play, acquiring patterns of language, thought and feeling which aid the growth of imagination and rationality and establish their social identity, suggests that oral narrative is a powerful tool for learning which should be more fully acknowledged in secondary English. The personal and social vulnerability of young adolescents suggests that*

*classroom foregrounding of oral narrative could be of particular value in building their confidence at this stage of their education. It is also likely that there are pedagogical advantages in deliberately featuring pupils' oral narratives in the secondary English curriculum.*

## CHAPTER SEVEN:

### The Empirical Inquiry: Methodology

#### Introduction

This chapter gives a full account of the methodology of my empirical work which was intended to answer the questions:

- *Are there strengths of pupils' oral language that are being ignored in the secondary English curriculum?*
- *What can teachers learn from a 12/13 year old, who persistently avoids writing and yet is able to compose complex stories orally?*

Being able to answer these questions would put me in a position to provide a satisfactory answer to my 'crucial question' :

*Since individuals master narrative discourse as a form of communication, what social, educational and pedagogical benefits could there be from including oral storytelling by pupils in the secondary English curriculum?*

(p.20)



The chapter is organised in the following sections:

1. Preliminary reflections on experiences during the early stages of the inquiry
  - 1.1 Teacher and pupil: differing tacit assumptions about oral and written modes of narrative
  - 1.2 Analysis of an oral story by a 7 year old pupil (Gee, 1990, op.cit.)
  - 1.3 Narratological analyses of a secondary pupil's oral stories.
2. Methodology
  - 2.1 The collection of material
  - 2.2 The ethnographic approach
  - 2.3 Framing the tellings (this section draws on Speech Event Theory and the Ethnography of Communication)
  - 2.4 Textual analysis of story data (using Halliday's three functions of language as frame, this section details six textual analyses applied to the story data)
  - 2.5 Research Design (an outline of procedures detailed and exemplified in Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten)

1. Preliminary reflections on experiences during the early stages of the inquiry

1.1 Teacher and pupil: differing tacit assumptions about oral and written modes of narrative

The assumption that the oral mode of expression is inferior to the written is generally taken for granted in education and reinforced by habitual practices. I was made aware of this when I transcribed and read the following tape recording of an interchange between Emma and myself:

*(Emma and I (T) are working in the Reading Room during 'Extra English'. We are discussing an English homework assignment, set by Mrs. B., that Anna had not done: to write an 'animal poem' after hearing several poems read and discussed in an English lesson the previous week.)*

T: did you start on any animal poems at all?

E: well/ I did/erm/ but just got all crumpled up in my bag and things like that and (P)

T: well/ shall we have a think about that now, then?

E: yeah all right

T: how about doing that now then ? / would you like to get/ erm/ do you want some pictures/ or poems to read perhaps? / could you get the broadsheets that she was using?

E: no/ I could wait till English

T: or would you like to just start now and make up something yourself?

E: well, I'd like to say some things about animals what've been caught/ yes.

- T: were you thinking about the snare poem? / that one?
- E: I've got a story like this/ the snare
- T: well/ go on then/ talk into the tape/ go on ..
- E: the snare/ I heard a scream of pain/ but where?/ there (P) I heard it again/ it was a painful horrible sound of pain/ but I cannot see where it is / that animal who needed help/ yet no one was there for his aid/it must be somewhere/ and I heard it again/ there (P)/ it was a rabbit/ its paw was stuck in a snare/ no one was around/ I didn't know what to do/ I was there/ it was a snare/ and the rabbit was stuck in there/ I had to get it out some way (P) but (P) all my friends left me/ and went to play/ I knelt against the snare/ there (P) run/ you're free again
- T: right!/ that's lovely! / did you/ did you write/ is that what you wrote *before?*
- E: no/ I just made it up as I went along/ I've got it now/ on tape
- T: yes/ you have

The transcript shows how Emma's reflective oral performance, structured by her memories of a poem and of her own response to it, challenged my assumption that narrative composition has to be written. She knew that telling a story was what she could do best; I expected writing.

## 1.2 Analysis of an oral story by a 7 year old pupil (Gee 1990, op.cit.)

When I first read Gee's *Social Linguistics and Literacies* (1990 op.cit.), I was drawn to it because it describes an experience parallel to my own when I first listened to Emma's tape of 'Virus Hit School'. In 1981, Gee heard recordings and read transcripts of oral stories produced in a classroom context by a seven year old black American girl, Leona (not her real name). He thought that the stories showed wonderful linguistic ability, but they were regarded by her teachers as failures. In numerous publications since

1981, Gee has confronted this paradox by analysing the discourse structures and thematic organisation of Leona's stories and revealing their literary characteristics (Gee 1985, 1986, 1989a, 1990/1996 op.cit., 1991, 1993).

Gee has made multiple analyses of the oral narratives of individuals; these include literary analysis (Jakobson, 1960, op.cit.; Chatman, 1978), linguistic discourse analysis (Stubbs, 1983) and prosodic analysis (Gee & Kegl, 1983; Gee & Grosjean, 1984). He believes that speech is universally structured in lines which are grouped in what he calls 'stanzas' and larger 'sections' or 'strophes' which consist of several stanzas; he favours this terminology because it stresses the connection of ordinary speech with poetry and links the findings of his own research with studies of Native American oral narratives (Tedlock 1981, op.cit.; Hymes, 1981, op.cit.; Scollon and Scollon, 1981, op.cit.). I now describe, illustrate and discuss Gee's system of discourse analysis using one of Leona's stories, 'Puppy'.

### 1.2.1 Idea units

All language is produced in 'idea units' which are single focuses of consciousness analogous to the single focus of the eye as it scans a scene through many rapid focuses (Chafe 1979). Most idea units consist of a simple clause with one piece of new information towards the end. This new information carries the most stress and is marked by a salient movement in the pitch of the voice (either rising, falling, rising-falling or falling-rising). Once the agent or an adverbial element has been introduced as an idea unit, it can feature as old (and therefore unstressed) information in later clauses. This is a typical discourse pattern in English and across languages (Givón 1979, op.cit.); it appears that speech aims at a series of short clauses as ideal

idea units. Idea units can be seen in the following transcript of the beginning of 'Puppy' (1). Each focus of consciousness is separately numbered. Each underlined word is said with a major pitch movement.

'Puppy' (1).

1. last yesterday
2. when my father
3. in the morning
4. an' he...
5. there was a hook
6. on the top of the stairway
7. an' my father was pickin' me up
8. an' I got stuck on the hook
9. up there
10. an' I hadn't had breakfast
11. he wouldn't take me down
12. until I finished all my breakfast
13. cause I didn't like oatmeal either

In all cases except for 13, the pitch movement is rising, falling or falling-rising; 13 is said with a fall in pitch, indicating closure. The underlined words carry stress. Where a phrase is underlined, as in 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, there is some stress on all content words, none on the function words. Thus, in 6, 'the top of the stairway', only 'top' and 'stairway' are stressed. From 6 onwards, by which point the speaker is truly launched into her narrative, the spurts of speech, except for 9, are all single clauses. Most focuses of consciousness in all speech, regardless of age or dialect, are one clause long.

### 1.2.2 Lines and stanzas

Several idea units may together constitute a larger block of information, thus forming a 'stanza'. Gee removes from the transcript all disfluencies and hesitations (which he thinks probably indicate planning), thus creating a second version of the story. This treatment - and a different arrangement of the material on the page- reveals the stanzas which he finds are usually groups of four lines.

#### 'Puppy' (2)

##### Stanza 1

1. last yesterday in the morning
2. there was a hook on the top of the stairway
3. an' my father was pickin' me up
4. an' I got stuck on the hook up there

##### Stanza 2

5. an' I hadn't had breakfast
6. he wouldn't take me down
7. until I had finished all my breakfast
8. cause I didn't like oatmeal either

The eight lines/clauses fall into two groups of four, each group about one important event: getting stuck and having to finish breakfast, respectively.

### 1.2.3 Parallelism ('Equivalence' in Hymes, 1996, op.cit.)

Lines frequently display syntactic and semantic parallelism with lines adjacent or near to them. This effect can be seen in the following stanzas from 'Puppy' (2).

### Stanza 3

9. an' then my puppy came
10. he was asleep
11. he tried to get up
12. an' he ripped my pants
13. an' he dropped the oatmeal all over him

### Stanza 4

14. an' my father came
15. an' he said 'did you eat all the oatmeal?'
16. he said, 'where's the bowl?'
17. I said 'I think the dog took it'.
18. 'Well I think I'll have t' make another bowl.'

The introduction of one stanza by '..my puppy came' and the next by '..my father came', sets up a contrast between father and puppy. Stanza 3 has four actions (of the puppy) while Stanza 4 has four speakings (of the father). This sort of patterning gives Leona's story an affinity to oral poetry (Finnegan 1977, op.cit.) and written texts based on long oral tradition, such as the Bible and the works of Homer (Gee 1993, op.cit.). Gee calls narratives that mark out lines, stanzas and sections with structural parallelism 'poetic'. 'Puppy' (2) is clearly poetic according to this criterion.

#### 1.2.4 Sections

Sections are large topic units, definable by one topic or theme. They involve no internal changes of place, time or major characters. Within sections, stanzas tend to fall into particular structures or patterns, definable on the basis of parallelism. They tend to end on a line with a falling pitch glide. At the opening of a section, there tend to be a good number of hesitations and idea units, shorter than a clause. Thus we see that stanzas 1 and 2 above constitute a section, functioning as the setting of the puppy story.

## Non-narrative sections

Of special interest in 'Puppy' (2) is the non-narrative section (ll.28-31) which amounts to an evaluation of the story (Labov 1972) and acts as a transition between the main body of the story and the ending:

28. an' he always be followin' me when I go anywhere
29. he wants to go to the store
30. an' only he could not go to places where we could go
31. like to the stores he could go but he have to be chained up

The style of this section is more syntactically complicated and less typically poetic than other sections. Gee describes it as 'prosaic'.

### 1.2.5 The whole story

Gee insists that language in use is always ideological; by this he means that it always involves in some way, either explicitly or implicitly, the speaker's taking a perspective on the distribution of social goods. The search for status and solidarity, both social goods, are major underlying motivations in speech (Milroy 1976; Gee 1990, op.cit.). In the spontaneous telling of a complete story, status and solidarity are sought and perspective taken through the use of five inter-related sub-systems of language: *prosody*, *cohesion*, *discourse organisation*, *contextual signals* and *thematic organisation*. The operation of these systems can be illustrated from the story under discussion:

- in the *prosodic organisation* of the text, lines may end in a closure- or a continuation-contour, depending on the perspective of the speaker



(Crystal 1979; Bolinger 1986). Thus, in 'Puppy' (1), a falling closure contour occurs in line 8, bringing the setting section to an end;

- *cohesive ties* are those words, phrases and syntactic devices which link two parts of the text to one another (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). In 'Puppy' ( 2) the example of parallelism in stanzas three and four, quoted above, functions as such a cohesive device;
- *discourse organisation* includes the organisation of the text into lines, stanzas and sections as well as patterns of language within and across stanzas, as already shown; prosody and cohesion both contribute to the whole (Gee 1986,1989; Hymes 1981; Scollon and Scollon 1981, op.cit.; Tedlock 1983);
- *contextualization signals* tell the listener what the speaker's assumptions are about the speaker-listener relationship and about the world, e.g. 30, 31(Gumperz 1982);
- *thematic organisation*: Personal stories are like the myths of oral cultures, which deal with contradictions people face in life and are found in variant forms; variants represent different solutions to the same problems; sometimes contradictions cannot be resolved. (Levi-Strauss, 1955, op.cit. See Chapter One). In 'Puppy', a culture/nature contrast is set up between the father organising his daughter's daily routine and the puppy, whose youthful exuberance thwarts the father's efforts. This contrast implies an opposition between the young girl herself and the authority/discipline of the adult world.

### 1.2.6 Discussion

Leona was only seven years old and belonged to an African-American community whose culture had '*a high regard for face-to-face, interactive participatory storytelling as a way of making deep sense of life..*'. (Gee, 1996, op.cit.:156). Her language was little marked by ways of speaking which arise from contact with written modes of communication. Consequently, the aesthetically satisfying patterns underlying her story, like those of Native American myths and tales (Hymes, 1996) are particularly clear. Gee's analytical system, based as it is on a combination of linguistic and literary approaches to narrative, seems to be well suited to revealing these patterns and so to revealing Leona's connections with the oral storytelling traditions of her past. 'Puppy' indicates how young children can make sense of their experience and communicate it in complex discursive forms learnt as ways of speaking within home and community (Heath, 1983, op.cit.). The story was also Leona's way of presenting herself to others (Goffman, 1974, op.cit.); along with all the other stories she could tell, it constituted her identity (Rosen, 1985, op.cit.). It is for this reason that Leona's teacher's assessment of her story as inadequate was potentially damaging since, to Leona, dissatisfaction with her story might have seemed like dissatisfaction with herself.

The continuity of narrative and literary competences discussed in Chapters Four and Five above is affirmed by Gee's multiple analyses of Leona's story which encouraged me to use both linguistic and literary theory in my own data analyses. However, since my pupils were older than Leona, were from a very different cultural background and had had much more contact with written modes, I did not feel it would necessarily be helpful to adopt his

approach in its entirety. Furthermore, the sound-quality of my own recordings would not have permitted detailed phonological analysis.

### 1.3 Narratological analysis of oral stories

Early in the process of data collection, it was clear to me that some stories, such as 'The Snare' (p.175, 354), had poetic features. Following Gee's example and that of Fox (1993,op.cit.), I therefore turned to the field of Poetics, specifically to Narratology, which is usually associated with structuralism in Linguistics, Myth Analysis and Semiotics (De Saussure, 1916; Barthes, 1957; Levi-Strauss, 1955; C.S.Peirce, 1931-1958). In the public tellings, performers were faced with the class as audience; in the private tellings, the performer, even when alone, summoned up and sometimes directly addressed a listener. Therefore discourse-focused approaches, in which the writer/teller-reader/listener relationship is focal and the reader/listener is seen as an active agent in making meaning, were, I thought, more likely to be suited to the analysis of my data than text-focused approaches, which take an objective view of the text.

I now summarise the chief theoretical features of one text-focused narratologist, Propp (1928/1958) and three discourse-focused narratologists (Culler, 1975, Barthes, 1970, Genette, 1980). The summary is followed by applications of each of the four theorists' analytical systems to two short narratives recorded by Emma.

#### 1.3.1 Propp

In his study of over 100 Russian fairytales, Propp drew an analogy between narrative and the syntax of a sentence. The subject of the sentence can be

compared with the typical characters of a tale, such as the hero or the villain, the predicate with their typical actions. The basic units of the narrative 'language' he calls *functions*; these are those actions of the characters defined as significant from the point of view of the action of the tale as a whole. He discovered only 31 functions in the whole corpus of tales. The functions follow a logical sequence and, although no tale includes them all, they always remain in the same order. Propp added seven spheres of action or roles: the villain, the donor, the helper, the princess and her father (the sought-after person) the dispatcher, the hero and the false hero (Propp, 1928/1958, op.cit.). He discovered that, whereas Russian fairytales were superficially very diverse, fundamentally, they were very similar.

### 1.3.2 Culler: naturalization and vraisemblance

For Culler, literature is a semiotic system; the act of reading a new text depends on the reader's experience of all the signals it sets up. These signals are conventions which tell us how to read a particular work, helping us to allot it to a particular genre. We read each new text through or against other texts, both literary and social; thus, the concept of intertextuality is central. The fundamental expectation of a reader approaching a novel is that it will create an illusory world, which seems real and this sense of reality or *vraisemblance* is structured into texts through the process of naturalization, an activity of the mind whereby we assimilate or interpret new experiences, integrating them with prior experience. Naturalization of texts occurs at five levels of *vraisemblance*: the first level involves the reader in checking the text being read against the commonsense socially-given text, 'the real'; the second is the level of implicitly shared cultural knowledge, the third, the level of shared

knowledge of literary conventions such as the implied narrator and narratee of written fiction. The fourth level involves conventional implicit or explicit denials that one is following specific literary conventions and at the fifth level of *vraisemblance*, specific reference is made to other literary texts of the same genre (Culler 1975, op.cit.). Literary competences lie in knowing how these systems work (Fox, 1993, op.cit.).

### 1.3.3 Barthes: five codes of fiction

Barthes developed his theories about the reader's ways of making sense of a novel in *S/Z* (1970, tr, 1974), his essay on Balzac's novella, *Sarrasine*, in effect, a demonstration of the operation of the five codes of fiction showing how the reader activates the voices of the text. Barthes first divides the text into 561 'lexias' which are units of reading/semantic models based on the progress of the reader through the text and the moves he or she must make, away from the text to the world (or the codifications of the world invoked by the text) in order to make sense of the text. The *proairetic code* is the code of actions governing the construction of the plot and the *hermeneutic code*, which deals in enigmas and solutions, is also crucial to the plot, because it raises questions in the reader's mind and keeps him or her reading, in order to find out what happens next. The *semic code* provides models which enable the reader to collect features which relate to persons and develop characters. The *symbolic code* guides extrapolation from text to symbolic and thematic readings. The *cultural code* is constituted by the background to which the text refers. The primary function of all of these codes is to bring into play models of *vraisemblance*, i.e. to produce a world (Barthes, 1970, tr.1974, op.cit.).

#### 1.3.4 Tense, Mood and Voice in narrative fiction

Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (1972, tr.1980) shares the understanding that a narrative is a form of communicative interaction between writer and reader. Narrative analysis implies studying the relationships between *story*, 'the signified or narrative content', *narrative* 'the signifier...discourse or narrative text' and *narrating* which is 'the producing narrative action...' The narrative, the actual text, is the only one of the three aspects which is available to inspection; the other two must be inferred from it. Genette is concerned with the ways in which the text of the narrative distorts the story. The story is the sequence of events as they might have happened in real time and space; the narrative is the writer's attempt to imitate this sequence, inevitably distorting it by omission, by condensation or in a variety of other ways. Genette takes categories from the grammar of verbs to analyse narratives; these are: TENSE, dealing with time relationships, specifically: order, duration and frequency; MOOD, dealing with forms and degrees of narrative representation and VOICE, which is the way the narrating itself is implicated in the narrative.

#### 1.3.5 The application of narratological theory to two exemplars

I now bring together the transcribed texts of two short spontaneous oral narratives recorded by Emma, the composer of 'Virus Hit School', and some of the apparatus of narratology described above. My aim is to demonstrate which approaches most effectively reveal Emma's literary competences. The transcripts are arranged in T-units (see p213). The first text is 'The Whale'.

## The Whale

1. it was very calm on the sea as the day was beginning
2. all the harpooners went out
3. and the bells were ringing
4. 'come on
5. it's time to go
6. and we shall go harpooning
7. there's a whale there a great white  
that has --' (P)\*
8. they let off the snares
9. and (P) let off the flares
10. the whale jumped in agony there
11. as night began to fall the whale was  
in pain
12. then it sank
13. and the sea was calm again
14. nothing was there as the sun went down
15. and left everywhere sad
16. it was just a sad old day
17. the whale was not there any more.

## Proppian Analysis (text-focused)

According to Propp, the basic units of the narrative language are 31 functions, actions of the characters which are significant from the point of view of the tale as a whole. Here, the functions relating to the harpooners are three: 'they went out'(2), 'they let off the snares'(8) and 'they let off the flares'(9); the functions relating to the whale are two: it 'jumped in agony' (10) and 'it sank' (12). If 'The Whale' is thought of as a quest, like the Russian fairytales, the harpooners fulfill functions 11 (the hero leaves home) and 16 (the hero and villain join in direct combat); the whale fulfills function 30 (the villain is punished). The story is not well served by this kind of analysis since it does not address what the story seems to me, as reader, to be about, namely the sadness of the whale's death at the hands of the harpooners. The feelings expressed in the story, which I am

aware of because I know the teller, the intertextual context of her story and the context of her telling, are not addressed by Propp's analytical system; it is not concerned with such things, taking, as it does, an objective view of the text standing alone.

#### Culler's levels of Vraisemblance (discourse-focused)

If the transcript of this story can be naturalized by a reader according to Culler's five levels of vraisemblance, we will know that the maker of the story has internalized at least some of the conventions of narrative fiction. It will also mean that she has postulated a listener.

The level of 'the real' : in our society it is known and accepted that the sun will rise and set each day, that (church?) bells ring in the morning, that men go out with weapons to hunt whales and that whales die as a result.

The level of cultural stereotypes: it is often assumed that a group of men who set off on a joint endeavour (fox hunt, rugby game), need to rally each other for the task (5-8).

The level of genre conventions : this story deploys narrative conventions in that there is a clear beginning and ending; the action is framed by the day. The internal structure of the story is straightforwardly linear.

The level of subverting genre conventions: the story upsets the listener's expectations that the fate of the hero (the harpooners) will be revealed.



The level of intertextuality: The story has greater depth when it is read against the text of a poem written by a twelve year old boy; this poem had been read in class the week before Emma composed 'The Whale'. I give the text of the poem followed by a comparison between it and 'The Whale'.

Whale at Sea

The harpoon was ready  
'Whale ahoy!' cried the first mate.  
The bitter arctic wind blew across the deck.  
It nipped through my thick furs.  
Harpoon on target-  
FIRE!  
Thud went the harpoon into the whale's thick blubber.  
The sensation of satisfaction tingled through my body as I hit it.  
The water was red and disturbed.  
It was giving us quite a struggle.  
It wasn't dead yet  
A feeling of tenseness, wondering whether to put another harpoon in it.  
But it was all over.  
The whale was dead.

Like 'The Whale', this poem concerns both whale hunt and whale death but here the killing of the animal is envisioned as a military operation; the narrator is one of the men involved in the killing and there is a concentration on his feelings and thoughts. 'The Whale' begins in similar vein (1-8) though there is no first person narrator. Then, after a pause, and as though as a result of her thoughts during that pause, Emma alters her stance towards the story she is telling: the harpooners disappear and the whale becomes central. The total effect of her composition can now be seen as dialogic, a response to the boy's poem, voicing sensitivity to the whale's suffering rather than enjoyment of the men's triumph over it.

### Barthes's five codes (discourse-focused)

Although 'The Whale' is a very short story, it is clear, from the way in which it meets the reader's need for naturalization at each of the levels proposed by Culler, that Barthes's codes could be applied to it. Thus we see the following:

The proairetic code (code of actions) is activated in 2,3, 9, 10, 12, and 14

The hermeneutic code (code of enigmas and solutions) in 7

The symbolic code (which structures the themes of the whole narrative) emerges in the antitheses between 1-3 and 12-15, 1-3 and 14-17.

The referential code operates in 2 and 3.

The semic code does not operate because there is no character interest in the story.

### Genette's categories of TENSE, MOOD and VOICE (discourse-focused)

Genette's system of categories explores the fine detail of the narrator's art. If it can be shown to be applicable to Emma's stories, a more detailed picture of her literary competences will be revealed.

TENSE: like most of the stories in the data, 'The Whale', is told in a chronological sequence. In order to explore the category of Tense, I turn to the second of three versions of Episode 1 of another story Emma composed, 'E.T. Returns(2)' This is one of two sequels to the film, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (Spielberg, 1982). Because Emma wanted to connect the action of her sequel to that of the film, she had to use anachronies which were not necessary in 'The Whale'.

E.T.Returns (2): Episode 1 (b)

1. it was years by now since E.T. last come
2. Eliot and his sister were in bed
3. one night the light-
4. he seen a light in the sky
5. it grew bigger and bigger
6. eventually it landed
7. he quickly jumped out of bed
8. and went over to it at the window
9. 'it's E.T. - he's back' said Eliot
10. he's grabbed his sister
11. and she jumped up
12. and had a look
13. it was
14. it's E.T.
15. he was back
16. quickly they ran
17. and got the dressing downs
18. and went outside
19. 'hello E.T. its nice to see you back'
20. 'hello it's nice to see you back' said E.T.
21. meanwhile as they seen E.T.
22. and talking to him
23. lots o' strange things happened
24. a load of plants come off the ship
25. you can remember them from the last voyage when E.T.came
26. E.T. was very nice and happy now
27. he was better at speakin' English
28. he wasn't very good at it last time
29. he had been taking English exams
30. at last it was time for the space ship to take off
31. it took off
32. once again E.T. was alone
33. he was alone stranded three thousand million miles from home
34. but he didn't mind this time because he'd come to stay for a few weeks till it was time for the spaceship to return
35. and take him back to his own planet

The sub-divisions of Genette's category of TENSE are: order, duration and frequency. The order of events in the narrative may distort that of the story by means of prolepsis, analepsis or anachrony. The duration of events in the narrative may distort those in the story by elision, expansion, summary

or pause. Frequency involves such questions as whether an event happened once in the story and is narrated once, happened once in the story and is narrated several times or happened several times in the story but is narrated only once.

Order: In 25 and 28 there are analepses, flashbacks to E.T.'s last visit to earth (i.e. in the film); these introduce the explanation of his present happiness which is the result of being better able to communicate than before. The improvement has come about because of schooling ('English exams') in the interim. 34 and 35 offer a prolepsis, an anticipation of the end of E.T.'s current visit.

Duration: This category covers the speed and rhythm of the narration. The sub-categories are: summary, pause, ellipsis and scene. A summary accelerates the narration, the story is summarised; a pause means the story comes to a stop and there is description; an ellipsis means that a period of story time is omitted; a scene, that the time of narrating and the time of the story are roughly equal; in the case of dialogue, they are exactly the same.

The following pattern can be discerned in 'The Whale':

- 1     pause
- 2     summary
- 3     pause
- 4-7   scene
- 8     ellipsis
- 9 -10 summary
- 11    pause
- 12    summary

- 13 pause
- 14 summary
- 15-17 pause

Thus, we see that Emma varies the pace at which this narrative moves, using all four categories.

Frequency: This category concerns the relationships of repetition between the narrative and the events of the story; they may be singulative or iterative. In 'The Whale', the following pattern can be seen:

- 1 iterative
- 2 singulative
- 3 iterative
- 4 -12 singulative
- 13-16 iterative
- 17 singulative

Thus, we see that both kinds of frequency are present in this story.

## MOOD

Mood conveys distance and perspective. Distance signifies the relation of the narration to its own materials, whether the story is recounted (diegetic) or represented (mimetic), as in direct speech. Perspective or 'focalization' of story information in the narrative answers the question: 'Who sees what happens and how much do they see?'

In 'The Whale', the beginning and ending (1-3 and 14-17) and T-unit 10 are unfocalized, as though reported by an unseen, omniscient narrator. T-units 4-7 are focalized from the harpooners' point of view, 8 and 9 unfocalized and 11-13 focalized from the whale's point of view. Thus, the whole consists of a mixture of unfocalized and variably focalized narration.

## VOICE

Voice is about the extent to which the narrating voice influences the narrative. The narrator is not the empirical author of a fiction but a voice within the text. Genette distinguishes five functions of the narrator:

the narrative function tells the story,

the directing function comments on the narrative,

the communicating function relates to the narratee, (also within the narrative and not the empirical reader),

the testimonial function bears witness,

the ideological function expresses an ideological point of view.

In 'The Whale', the narrative function is used throughout; in 'E.T', however, although the narrative function is used most of the time, Emma also uses the communicative function to maintain contact with the narratee's memory of the film on which her story is based. For example,

- 19.       you can remember them from the last voyage when E.T.come
- 26.       once again E.T.was alone..

### 1.3.5 Summary and Conclusions

This section has established that discourse-focused approaches are more appropriate to Emma's work than text-focused approaches. Their application has revealed:

- that Emma has internalized many of the conventions of narrative fiction which enable her to produce a storyworld and a sequence of events within it which can easily be naturalized by a reader from her own community, using naturalization and activating Barthes's connotative codes;
- that, when she needs to, Emma can use conventional ways of handling time relations, different ways of representing the story in narration and some of the various possible narrator functions proposed by Genette;
- that the structuralist concept of inter-textuality is crucial to an understanding of Emma's work.

Although it is a brief story, the significance of 'The Whale' is not simply dependent on the sequence of actions it contains. A plot summary would read: 'Some men go out to hunt a whale and they kill it; it sinks.' David Lodge writes, of a story by Hemingway, that '*..the meaning of the story does not inhere in its basic action*' (Lodge, 1980, op.cit.). I would maintain that the meaning of 'The Whale', lies not in its plot but in the feelings it expresses to the listener, especially in the repetitive lament of the ending .

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 The collection of material

During the Autumn and Spring Terms of 1983-4, material was collected from performed narrative events which happened in both private and public contexts, all of which I called 'tellings'. 'Private tellings' in the Autumn Term were performances by Emma, either alone with a tape-recorder or in a tutorial context with myself, as in the example above. 'Public tellings' in the Spring Term were performances by all the pupils in turn, with the class as audience.

#### 2.1.1 The material collected

I collected recordings of a total of thirty-six tellings:

\*The private tellings, which occurred in the Autumn Term, from September to December, 1983, produced five stories; to these I added three further stories Emma had recorded privately in 1982, during her first term in secondary school, making a total of eight.

\*The public tellings, some of which were solos and some collaborative performances, took place in the Spring Term of 1984. They produced twenty-eight stories told by members of the English class.

The collected material also includes



\*transcripts of recordings of other versions of some of the 'public stories', a copy of written source-material used by one pupil and an extract from my participant-observer journal;

\*a written story, composed by Emma during the term of the private tellings and copies of writings by Michael. (For copies of all collected material, see Appendices, 2, 3, 4, pp376-418).

## 2.2 The ethnographic approach

As Shirley Bryce Heath points out, *'Ethnography focuses on culture as learned behaviour and on language habits as part of that shared learning'* (Heath, 1983:11). In my inquiry, an ethnographic study of the performance process (the telling) was followed by textual analyses of its product (the transcribed story-text).

I have already taken an ethnographic stance to my data, since this is the most inclusive way to discuss what I claim is important evidence, hitherto neglected in secondary school English. In an ethnographic study, the researcher must be a part of the world which is to be studied; in the role of participant observer, s/he shares in the activities and sentiments of the participants, understands their histories and yet, as someone who is not part of the power structure, remains non-threatening and able to make vital interpretations through 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1982). Inevitably, the researcher changes the situation and is changed by the experience of researching but s/he becomes able and qualified, through that experience, to make vital interpretations of the cultural processes observed. Ethnography permits the use of a variety of

methods, including life-histories and statistical data. Above all, the researcher *'needs to make explicit what is known implicitly by the group but also has a rigorous approach to data collection and analysis'* (Gregory, 1992: 182).

### 2.2.1 Taking the role of participant observer

When I began my field work, I arranged with Mrs. B. that I would not go into the College until four weeks after the beginning of the Autumn Term; by this time she was established as the new English teacher of the class. In this way we ensured that there was no confusion in the minds of pupils about who was in charge. When I did go back to the classroom, I introduced myself as a 'helper' who would be present for some English lessons, but not all. This arrangement made it easy for me to work with pupils in one-to-one or small-group situations, to be peripheral in whole class lessons run by Mrs. B. and occasionally to replace her and take a lesson. Such patterns of work were not unusual in the College, where collaborative and team teaching routinely happened in Maths and Humanities, so my presence in the classroom did not surprise the pupils.

### 2.2.2 Field notes

Research in the role of participant-observer is essentially a reflexive activity made possible because the researcher is neither completely inside the activity under consideration (as participant) nor completely outside it (as observer). S/he is free to take a distanced view of events and therefore to think reflexively about them, in this way becoming *'the research instrument par excellence'* (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1982, op.cit: 18).

Making field notes is a recognised way for the participant-observer to engage in continuous reflexivity. During the field work period, I did not make notes during lessons because that might have interfered with what I was doing and could have affected others' perceptions of my role. Instead, I kept a journal, written each evening. I recorded the outline of a lesson as planned by the teacher and my personal impressions of the way the lesson had worked out; whenever I made tape-recordings, I placed my first rough transcripts of them in the journal with my immediate questions and speculations about what I had recorded.

### 2.2.3 Adding depth to the ethnographic description

As participant observer, I had a double advantage: my own history as a teacher in the college meant I was privy to the life-histories of all participants and, taking the role of 'helper' during the inquiry allowed me access to information I would not have had in the role of teacher. The following examples illustrate this double advantage:

- (i) with regard to 'The Phantom Pilot', a story performed publicly by Magnus, I had a recording of another, longer, version of the same tale he had told privately, to two friends, during an English lesson with me the previous year. Comparing the two transcripts enabled me to identify and explain significant textual differences between the two (see p.378-380).
- (ii) as 'helper' I was offered confidences by Michael and Chris which enabled me to make sense of their story, 'Escape' which was superficially very confusing. I knew that they would not have

confided in me if I had had the authority of a teacher at the time (see p.276).

I believe that my view of the evidence, backed by an inclusive ethnography must, at the point of analysis, be significantly different from from that of others.

## 2.3 Framing the tellings

On the surface, each telling was unique. Making comparative analyses of tellings required a model of the similarities underlying their dissimilar surface features. I found Hymes's model of the communicative event and Bauman's extension of this model to the performed narrative event appropriate to my purpose (Hymes 1964; Bauman 1986, op.cit.).

### 2.3.1 The communicative event

Taking an anthropologically-oriented linguistic perspective, Hymes adapted Jakobson's theoretical, text-focused model of the speech event (Jakobson, 1960), making it applicable to actual instances of communication between real people. He described the communicative event as a stretch of interaction which has the same general purpose of communication, topic and participants, using the same language variety, maintaining the same tone/key, the same rules for interaction in the same setting and ending when there is a change in the major participants, role relations or focus of attention. Each of the features of the communicative event has a particular function (see Fig.7.1 below); in every instance, all functions come into play in a hierarchy ordered according to the purposes and needs of participant

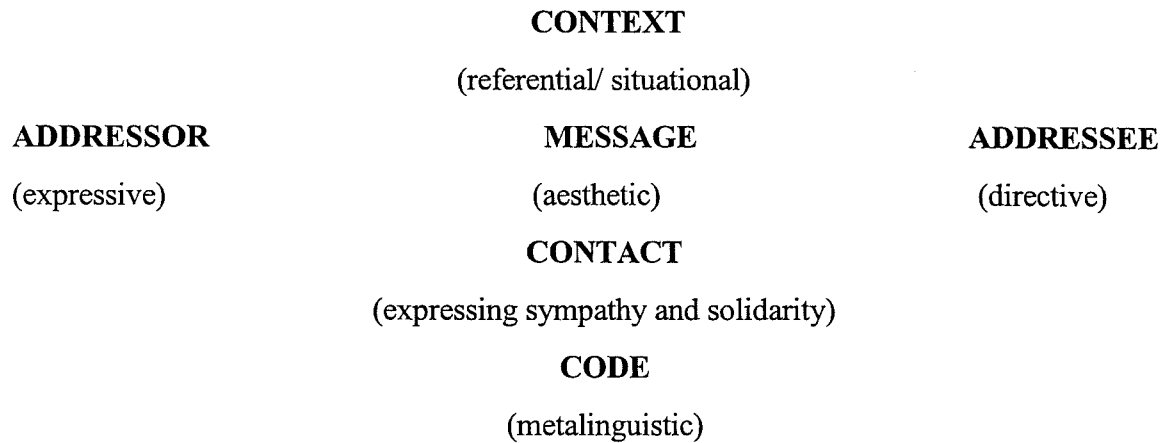


Fig. 7.1 Hymes's model of the Communicative Event (1964 op.cit.)

(Terms in brackets represent functions present in any communicative event).

Hymes added the idea that the addressor might focus not only upon individual features of the event but upon the whole event, so entailing a metacommunicative function (Hymes 1964, op.cit.). We see this function in operation at the end of Emma's story of the trapped rabbit (p.175) when she says, 'there (*P*) run (*P*) you're free again', speaking directly to the suffering animal as she releases it. These words focus the listener/reader's attention on the whole of the piece.

### 2.3.2 The performed narrative event

Hymes drew attention to performance, constituted by interaction between the communicative competence of the performer, the competence of other participants and the '*cybernetic and emergent properties*' of the event itself as it unfolds, creating a symbolic form (Hymes 1972: 283). From the perspective of empirically based research in folklore studies, Richard Bauman demonstrated that the symbolic forms we call oral narratives are essentially

social creations, processes of performance. Individual narrators draw on their own experience-including what others have told them - and then add it, through their performance, to the lives of their listeners. Narratives are thus doubly rooted in social life: *'keyed both to the events in which they are told and to the events that they recount, toward narrative events and narrated events'* (Bauman 1986 op.cit.: 2). As with every aspect of culture, conventionalised patterns of organisation can be discerned in performed narrative events. These patterns are not rigid structures or fixed moulds; they simply act as precedents or guidelines for narrators. Because audiences' and narrators' goals, purposes and competences differ, it is likely that each event will be unique. A narrator assumes responsibility to his/her listeners for a display of artistry; they assess and evaluate his/her skill as they listen. These processes, which foreground the skill of the narrator, inevitably foreground the narrator too. Thus, the social identity of the narrator and the social relations between participants in the event are likely to shift in the course of a performance, as it unfolds (Bauman, 1986, op.cit.).

### 2.3.3 Discussion

Hymes's concept of the communicative event, *'the metaphor or perspective basic to rendering experience intelligible'* (Hymes 1989: 443) grounded Jakobson's theoretical model in concrete human experience; Bauman's application of this concept confirmed its relevance to empirically based research and emphasised its dynamic character. This work was appropriate to my own study since, like Bauman, I wanted to analyse performed narrative events by individuals (Hymes 1964, op.cit.).

#### 2.3.4 Constructing ethnographic accounts of tellings

I turned next to the field of the ethnography of communication; ethnographers of communication aim to reveal the communicative competence of speakers within particular speech communities (Saville-Troike, 1989, orig. 1982). For my purposes, the speech community was the English class and English teacher working in a particular format (a telling) in an English lesson, itself within the multiple contexts described in Chapter Six. Communicative competence implies not just knowledge of the language code but also the ability to use it appropriately. In the case of my pupils, 'appropriately' implied using language suited to an audience composed of their peers and their teacher, to a multi-layered context, to a particular kind of curricular occasion and to a story of their choice.

Hymes maintains that 'ability for use' allows for the role of motivation in competence; he adds, *'it is especially important not to separate cognitive from affective and volitive factors'* (Hymes, 1972 op.cit.: 283). His explicit inclusion of feeling and intention makes it plain that the concept of communicative competence was particularly appropriate for my pupils since, as young adolescents, their relations with the particular audience they faced were significant in relation to their own self-definition and confidence.

#### 2.3.5 The conventions of the telling

The ethnographic perspective enables a researcher acting as participant-observer of cultural events to perceive and understand the conventions which govern them. Saville-Troike's list of the components of communication

devised on the basis of Hymes's work offers a useful starting point. The list includes:

- The scene (the extrapersonal context: genre, topic, purpose/function , setting)
- The key (emotional tone)
- The participants and their relationships
- The message (form and content)
- The act sequence
- The rules for interaction
- The norms of interpretation (shared understandings, common knowledge (Saville-Troike, 1989, op.cit.).

In an ethnographic account of a telling constructed using this list, some aspects of the scene, such as the physical setting of the event in time and space, can be directly described by an observer; other elements, such as the act sequence and the rules for interaction may be deduced through repeated observations. Description of participants, their relationships, norms of interpretation and the key of the event can be only superficially done on this basis; full description may well depend on bringing to bear cultural knowledge gained outside the event. The message, the spoken words preserved in the evidence of audio record and transcript, is of focal importance. It is the only tangible evidence,



once the telling is done, that it ever happened. In addition to the ethnographic perspective, I therefore needed theory which would enable me to analyse the language of the pupils' stories.

## 2.4 Textual analysis of the story data

Halliday's three basic functions of language: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual, provide a framework for organising discussion of the textual analysis of my story data. The *ideational function* enables speakers to express their own experience of the world, including the inner world of consciousness, the *interpersonal function* is the communicative function which we take on whenever we engage in linguistic interaction with others and the *textual function* enables speakers to construct coherent stretches of discourse, (Halliday 1970 op.cit.). Under these three headings, I now group the analytic approaches I decided to employ to reveal the communicative competence and literary competences of the pupil performers.

### 2.4.1 The ideational function

The ideational function is that part of the linguistic system which is concerned with the expression of content, what the message is 'about'. It includes both the experiential and the logical, i.e. both that which represents experience and that which is concerned with logical relations and relates only indirectly to experience (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

The narratives performed by the pupils in my study included lived experiences, re-tellings of stories gathered from other tellers, from print sources and from scripted films as well as invented stories drawing on some of

these sources. I noticed that, in their tellings, pupils sometimes used language they would not ordinarily have used in conversation. Appropriate analyses would show to what extent the language of the tellings included ways of speaking which arose from their contact with written modes of communication. I therefore applied to the transcripts a measure devised by Halliday (1989).

### **Measuring lexical density**

Halliday points out that, in written English, where there tend to be fewer main clauses and more dependent clauses, i.e. more syntactical complexity, than in conversational English, lexical density (LD) tends to be higher, indicating that more information is being carried. Following his directions, I worked out the LD of the transcripts of different performed narratives. Then, I made comparisons between them and investigated how far the LDs of story texts showed they were affected by written texts directly or indirectly experienced by the tellers (Halliday, 1989 op.cit.).

### **Revealing literary competences**

In an effort to ascertain whether my pupils could be said to show literary competences, I turned from this simple quantitative measure to the insights gained from Meek (1988 op.cit.) and from Fox (1993 op.cit.) (see Chapter Five, above). I had to ask

- what evidence there was in the transcripts that the stories were dialogic;
- whether they could be described as polysemic;

- whether they were in any way metaphoric;
- whether they showed that the narrators knew the conventions of different kinds of narratives.

In order to deal with these questions, I used some of the findings of analyses of story data according to Labov's narrative categories (Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Labov, 1972), analytical tools derived from discourse-focused narratology (Barthes, 1970, op.cit.; Genette, 1980, op.cit.) and an adaptation of Warlow's taxonomy of fiction. This taxonomy is based on the similarity or dissimilarity of the imaginary worlds created by authors to '*the external world as we see it and generally understand it*'. There are two main categories: the first consists of works where the normal laws of nature are suspended or amended and the rules of logic do not obtain (i.e. myths, legends, fairytale), the second covers works where the normal laws of nature are maintained and supernatural phenomena are excluded. Within these two principal categories, Warlow distinguishes thirteen different story types, distinguishable from one another by their dominant conventions according to which individual works can be allocated to places in the taxonomy (Warlow, 1977, op.cit.: 99). Warlow comments that one of the advantages of his taxonomy is that it focuses on narrative content, not on the medium of transmission and that, therefore, films or comics can be analysed on the same basis as novels. For this reason I thought it could also be adapted for use with pupils' oral narratives.

#### 2.4.2 The interpersonal function

Halliday emphasises the importance of the interpersonal function of language not only for communicative purposes but also because of its effect on the personal identity of speakers. Through this function, *'the individual is identified and reinforced since, by enabling him to interact with others, language also serves in the expression and development of his own personality'* (Halliday, 1970, op.cit.: 143). Bauman was thinking along similar lines when he pointed out that, during a performance, the performer's skill and self are both foregrounded, available for evaluation by the audience (Bauman, 1986, op.cit.).

#### **Linguistic expression of the desire for solidarity and status**

Sociolinguistic research has shown that two major motivations underlying all uses of language are: the desire for status in the eyes of those we admire or would impress and the desire for solidarity with those we think of as our peers (Brown & Gilman 1972, op.cit.; Milroy and Milroy 1985, op.cit. Gee, 1990). In the classroom tellings, it was evident that, since the audience combined teacher and peers, both desires motivated pupils as they took their turns to perform. Each teller wanted to impress the teacher, the powerful adult who represented the authority of the school/education system and each wanted, simultaneously, to maintain or improve their standing with their peers by expressing solidarity with them. The pressure of these conflicting desires was evident in the tellers' language. Using Standard English spoken with a regional accent, the language of their homes which they felt comfortable with, they moved across a dimension of formality-informality. Formal expression is more appropriate for addressing a teacher and more

suitable for speaking publicly; informal usage suggests out-of-class chat with peers and so, in a performance situation is a way of cultivating their good opinion and feelings of solidarity. Work by Ochs (1979) on the features of unplanned speech and Halliday's own account of the characteristics of 'natural spontaneous conversation' (Halliday 1989) were useful in showing how performers tailored their speech to the peer audience. Their ability to exploit the variability of language to express their own intentions towards their mixed audience had to be regarded as a sign of communicative competence in the pupils.

#### 2.4.3 The textual function

##### **Lexical cohesion**

The textual function of language enables speakers to construct coherent stretches of discourse which are not random collections of sentences but structured in accordance with cultural conventions. One aspect of this function is the establishment of cohesive relations by means of grammatical, lexical and referential ties (Halliday 1970, op.cit.). The coherence of the transcripts in my data was revealed by using the analytical system proposed by Halliday & Hasan (1976) and Numan (1993).

##### **Narrative structures**

I wanted a way of analysing the pupils' narratives to see whether they had recognisable narrative structures indicating implicit knowledge of narrative forms and conventions. I turned here to the theory of Labov and Weletsky (1967) and Labov (1972d), based upon studies of the spontaneous oral narratives of young urban African-American males. Although the context of

these studies was very different from that of mine, many of the young people concerned were of a similar age to my own pupils and there were similarities between the stories; therefore I thought that Labov's work was relevant to my own. Labov defines a minimal narrative as a sequence of two clauses, temporally ordered; a change in the order of these clauses will produce a different narrative. Beyond the minimum level, narratives consist of a sequence of narrative clauses which provide complicating actions and resolutions which are elaborated by the inclusion of elements of orientation and evaluation. Orientation identifies the time, place, persons, activities and situations of the complicating actions or plot structure; evaluation indicates the narrator's perspective on the events.

Fox points out that Labov emphasised the importance of orientation and evaluation elements in a narrative which can usually be identified by their grammatical complexity. These elements, which constitute a way of drawing listeners into a narrative, provide colour and definition and enable listeners to see the point of what is being said. The narrator's use of evaluation and orientation shows that he or she is aware of the needs of their audience. Thus, Labov's system recognises narrative as a discursive form, not just a verbal structure (Fox, 1993 op.cit.). The narratives I had collected could be analysed according to Labov's categories so that I could describe the pupils' narrative competence as far as discursive structure was concerned.

#### 2.4.4 Summary

The theories discussed in this chapter permitted a critical appraisal of the pupils' performances. The dominant focus of my inquiry was the narrator-audience relationship, the defining element of any communicative event; the

ways in which pupils handled this relationship revealed their communicative competence.

The textual function of performers' language was revealed by analyses of cohesive ties, of lexical density typical of written language and of syntactical structures typical of spoken language, taking informal everyday conversation as paradigm (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, op.cit.; Halliday, 1989, op. cit.). An analysis using Labov's narrative categories revealed their structure; (Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Labov, 1972, op.cit.).

The ideational function of performers' language indicated their literary competences; Labov's orientation and evaluation categories showed performers working to capture and hold their listeners' attention by suggesting that their stories were credible and merited being heard. The application of Warlow's taxonomy of fiction identified the story types performers assumed would capture and impress their listeners (Warlow, 1977, op.cit.). Other literary competences: awareness of the dialogic, polysemic and metaphoric possibilities of narrative ( Meek, 1988,op.cit.; Fox, 1993,op.cit.) were revealed using analytical tools drawn from the work of Barthes (1970, op.cit.) and Genette (1980, op.cit.).

Each of the analyses, whether focused primarily on the textual or ideational function of language, also revealed its interpersonal function, thus preserving the dominant focus of the enquiry on the narrator-audience relationship.

## 2.5 Research Design

Analyses were made of both public and private story data. I have already made clear how the private tellings by Emma occurred. The public tellings came about as follows: Mrs. B., impressed by Emma's oral stories, offered to run a unit on storytelling with the whole class. I welcomed this because the accumulation of data from the whole range of pupils could provide evidence of the educational, social and pedagogical value of oral storytelling in the secondary English curriculum. Accordingly, a storytelling unit was planned to continue over three weeks in English lessons. I was to model a telling and discuss it with the pupils who would write their own versions of the story I told. Next, all pupils would be asked to choose, prepare and practise telling any story they thought their class would enjoy. It could come from a book or film or from their own remembered experience, including stories other people had told them. Lesson time and homework time would be allocated to these preparatory activities, in the course of which writing could be used in any way they liked, though final performances would have to be delivered orally without the support of written texts. This plan was carried through and, in the event, the unit was extended to include collaborative performances as well as solos. By the end of the unit, everyone in the class had had one turn as teller and most had had two.

### 2.5.1 Transcription of pupils' tellings: from raw data to T-units

Complete transcripts were made of all the pupils' tellings which included the stories and surrounding talk/interventions by others. The raw story data were



idealised by removing all stumbles and garbles by the performers and the interventions of others. Pauses for thought were marked (*P*) as in 'The Snare' (see above, p.175). The idealised transcripts were then set out as sequences of numbered T-Units. A T-Unit (TU), is 'a minimal terminable syntactic unit', a single utterance consisting of one main clause and its dependent clauses (Perera 1984). Presenting the stories uniformly, as numbered TUs, provided a common point of reference for discussion of them.

#### 2.5.2 Six textual analyses of all story data

The stories were then analysed with regard to their

- (i) textual coherence,
- (ii) use of formal/informal language,
- (iii) use of conversational language,
- (iv) use of 'written language',
- (v) narrative structure,
- (vi) genre.

The dominant focus of the six textual analyses was the teller-audience relationship, the defining characteristic of any communicative event. As well as uncovering the tellers' use of the inter-personal function of language, analyses (i)-(iii) were designed to reveal their use of the textual function of language, analyses (iv)-(vi) their fulfilment of the ideational function. I now describe and justify the use of each.

**(i) Textual coherence**

I analysed the idealised transcripts to show that they were coherent texts, not just collections of unrelated clauses. Each was examined for its lexical cohesion, which establishes the material world of the story, for its grammatical cohesion, which links the whole of the utterance together, and for its use of anaphoric and cataphoric referential ties, which tighten the links between the different parts of a text, creating coherence and helping the audience make sense of the story (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, op.cit.; Numan, 1993).

**(ii) The use of formal/informal language**

In order to find out how responsive tellers were to their mixed audience of peers and teachers in the educational context, I examined the language of their stories in terms of its formality/informality and use of Standard English/regional dialect (Brown & Gilman, 1972, op.cit. ; Milroy & Milroy, 1985, op.cit.).

**(iii) The use of conversational language**

The tellers' peer audience were also their daily companions with whom they frequently chatted informally, both in school and out. To uncover tellers' cultivation of solidarity with the peer audience, the story data were examined to see if they conformed to a paradigm of conversational language, which includes the following features:

- utterances consisting of strings of paratactical clauses rather than sentences using subordination;
- 'and' being the most common connective linking paratactical clauses;
- clauses sometimes juxtaposed with no explicit links;
- referents, including the subjects of clauses, often omitted;
- generalised vocabulary being used, e.g. 'thing' in place of the name of an object;
- active constructions with indeterminate group agents, such as 'they', rather than passive constructions;
- speakers refining their meanings as they proceed;
- repetition of syntactic form (Chafe, 1974; Ochs, 1979; Brown & Yule, 1983; Stubbs, 1983; Halliday, 1989, op.cit.)

#### (iv) **The use of 'written language'**

(Inverted commas are used here to mark a precise term: 'written language' is language derived directly or indirectly from literary sources, used in either spoken or written medium.)

Conversational English favours linked main clauses, with or without conjunctions. Written English favours main clauses modified by dependent

clauses. In conversational English, lexical/content words tend to be fewer in number than grammatical/function words. Written English tends to include fewer grammatical/function words and more lexical/content words; it therefore tends to carry more information and so to have a higher level of lexical density (LD). The LD of a text in the spoken/written medium can be calculated by dividing the total number of lexical words by the total number of clauses (Halliday 1989, op.cit.). The presence of 'written language' in a text is indicated by higher LD. In order to identify the nature and appearances of such language in the story data, I calculated their LD. This analysis was designed to provide evidence of the inter-textual contexts of the stories.

**(v) Narrative structure**

In order to discover whether the tellers could create a well-structured narrative which also showed concern to involve the audience, I carried out a structural analysis of the idealised story data according to Labov's narrative categories (Labov & Weletsky, 1967, op. cit.; Labov, 1972, op.cit.; see pp 209, 210 above).

**(vi) Story genre**

I classified the story data according to an adaptation of Warlow's taxonomy of fiction (see p.207); this classification was designed to show pupils' familiarity with the conventions of stories their audience would recognise (Warlow, 1977, op. cit.).

All six analyses are exemplified in detail in Chapter Eight, where all six are applied to a paradigmatic telling: 'The Bear', by James.

### 2.5.3 Stage two analysis of the public stories

Culler describes fiction as essentially polysemic:

*Fiction can hold together within a single space a variety of languages, levels of focus, points of view, which would be contradictory in other kinds of discourse organized towards a particular empirical end* (Culler, 1975, op.cit.:261).

As listener, transcriber, reader and then critic of the public stories, I came to perceive them all as fictions, including the stories which were accounts of actual experiences that could be verified externally (see Chapter Nine, section 2.1). Thinking of the stories in the light of Culler's view of fiction, I re-examined the data and my analytical findings, for textual evidence of their polysemic nature. I found that analyses (ii), (iii) and (iv) clearly indicated the presence of different language varieties and analyses (iv), (v) and (vi) the presence of three layered significances: of credibility, reportability and intertextuality. Analysis (v) showed

- that tellers used orientations to conjure up explicit story worlds and characters that the audience would find credible and
- evaluations to ensure that the events of their stories would seem to be reportable, to have 'point' (Labov, 1972, op.cit.).

My repeated examinations of the texts made me aware of their inter-textual contexts: some were re-tellings of written texts or films, some drew on traditional tales and some on personal experiences, but all contained traces of other stories, shaped narratives with their own histories of passing between oral and written media (see Chapters Two and Three). Analysis (iv) confirmed my observations by revealing the presence and nature of the 'written language' the tellers had derived from their sources, even when I did not know precisely what these were. Analysis (vi) provided indications of tellers' awareness of the genre conventions of different kinds of stories.

In Chapter Nine, I select ten exemplars from the collection of 28 public tellings and discuss the three significances: of credibility, of audience awareness and of the presence of 'written language' I found in each. This detailed procedure is designed to show how differently the significances are manifested across the ten exemplars.

#### 2.5.4 Analysing the private stories

My analyses of the private stories were designed to illuminate the personal significance and educational potential of oral storytelling for the individual pupil and to sketch a developmental view of literary competences. In Chapter Ten, I trace Emma's history as a storyteller over roughly a year, arguing that her work reveals her developing literary competences. Within this chronologically ordered frame, I focus on the following three topics:

- The oral story as a form of verbal symbolic play. Emma's earliest stories are analysed as verbal symbolic play (see Chapter Five) constituting

evidence of the value of oral storytelling in her life following transfer from primary to secondary education. Closely linked to an intertext of film, they are shown to be likely metaphors of her experience, and productive ways of thinking about fears and relationships. Her assiduous drafting and re-drafting of the texts of these stories show Emma working towards mastery of oral narrative composition.

- The oral story as literature: I have already shown, above, that Emma's work can be analysed according to systems derived from structuralist poetics. In Chapter Ten, I display detailed analyses of 'Virus Hit School' according to categories from Genette (1980) and Barthes (1970); the findings of these analyses are placed alongside those of similar analyses of 'Ribs' Runners', a written story by Michael, which was created in the same curricular context. By comparing the two sets of findings I provide evidence of the existence of literary competences of the same order in both oral and written compositions.
- Sketching the development of literary competences, from 5 to 13 years: The detailed literary competences which were uncovered in 'Virus Hit School' and 'Ribs' Runners' are compared with those found in two five year olds (Fox, 1993, op.cit.). Like Emma, these younger children were not independent readers but, like Michael, they had had a rich experience of stories. The comparisons provide a basis for the construction of an account of the development of literary competences from age 5 to age 13. Four stories Emma recorded soon after experiencing written narratives provide evidence of the development of literary competences not apparent in her earlier stories, where filmed rather than written narrative was the dominant intertextual influence. This evidence enriches my conclusions

about the value of oral storytelling in the secondary English classroom discussed in Chapter Eleven.



## CHAPTER EIGHT:

### Analyses of a Telling Performed to a Classroom Audience

#### Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of tellings performed by individual pupils to a physically present audience of their peers and their English teacher (the 'public tellings'), in the course of a unit of work on oral storytelling (see Chapter Seven). The overview is conveyed through a paradigmatic instance: 'The Bear', by James.

- First, I construct an ethnographic account of the paradigm which displays the matrix of the telling as performed narrative event. I list the implicit rules for interaction, which, as participant-observer, I became aware of. These rules are linked to interactions between teller, audience and intertext in the course of James's performance.
- Next, I present a second, idealised, transcript of 'The Bear', in T-Unit format and demonstrate the detailed application to it of the six textual analyses discussed in theoretical terms in Chapter Seven.
- Finally, I summarise the findings of the textual analyses as evidence of James's communicative/narrative competence.

## 1. An ethnographic account of 'The Bear'

### 1.1 The curricular context of the public tellings

The plan outlined in Chapter Seven (p.212) was carried out. I performed a telling of 'The Pardoner's Tale' (Chaucer, Tr. Coghill, 1958) and the pupils subsequently re-created this story in modern terms, in writing. Mrs. B. then asked the class, for homework, to find a story they would like to tell to the class themselves. It could come from any source: a story someone else had told them, a story they had read in a book or newspaper or seen in a film or on TV. A complete double lesson was then spent on preparation, the pupils working alone or in pairs, practising telling their stories to themselves, to each other, to Mrs. B. or to myself. Most used writing to help them in some way; some made notes, others copied the whole story out and tried to commit it to memory. Storytelling sessions then took place during a series of lessons.

#### 1.1.1 The functions of the public tellings

The function of the tellings from the teacher's perspective, was the involvement of all the pupils, in the roles of both teller and listener; her integrated long-term aim was to help them to develop concentration and critical thinking as listeners, confident fluency as speakers and to widen their experience and enjoyment of stories in both capacities. The

function of the tellings from the pupils' perspective at the beginning of the unit seemed to be simply to carry out a task set by their teacher.

#### 1.1.2 The lesson context

As the lesson was long, Mrs.B used the first part for 'book sharing'. (In this activity, designed to encourage reading for pleasure, one pupil reads excerpts from and talks about a book s/he has enjoyed. The class are then encouraged to ask questions of the speaker and offer their own views). Karen talked about *Very Special People*, which described the life and death of a pair of Siamese twins and was liberally sprinkled with photographs. The class found this book very intriguing; they wanted to see all the photos and asked Karen several questions. Mrs.B. guided the subsequent discussion towards thinking about how people who might not seem 'normal' should be treated; reference was made to the story of the elephant man. Class reactions were a mixture of horror, fascination and sympathy. Talking about this book had the effect of drawing the class together as a unit and establishing a thoughtful, calm atmosphere. Mrs. B. then introduced the storytelling session. She told performers to put their notes aside, face the audience, look at them and tell the story as well as they could. She asked them, when they were acting as listeners, to think about whether the stories they heard were true or not and to be prepared to give a reason for their opinions later. (The consequences of this instruction and the question of the 'truth' of the stories are discussed in Chapter Nine, p251.) 'The Bear' was the sixth of ten performances that took place during the remainder of the lesson.

### 1.1.3 The setting

Chairs were arranged in a tight circle, denoting a degree of informality not uncommon in the college. Mrs.B. was perched on a table (as she had been from the beginning of the lesson). She was thus raised slightly above the members of the class who were sitting on chairs, a position indicative of her intention to control events. Beside her was one empty chair (the storyteller's chair) and on the other side of that, in charge of the tape recorder, I sat, in participant-observer role. The lesson took place during the first hour of the school day.

### 1.1.4 Power relations

Present in the room were twenty-two 12/13 year old pupils, described by their school as a mixed-ability English class, of whom thirteen were girls, nine were boys. All knew that, in general, they were obliged to do what their teacher, Mrs. B., asked of them and understood that anyone who was not called upon or who had not got a story to tell on this occasion would be expected to perform in the next English lesson. Mrs.B. had authority over the class because she was a member of the college teaching staff backed by familiar sanctions and because of her personal standing as a teacher who handled pupils fairly. She addressed all of them by their first names and maintained a friendly and relaxed but firm approach. During the lesson, she controlled the proceedings, asking for and, when necessary, choosing 'volunteer'

tellers and facilitating their performances. When a telling ended, she questioned teller and audience about the story and encouraged discussion. It was she who signalled when a new telling was to begin.

#### 1.1.5 The sequence of acts

The following sequence was instituted by Mrs. B. and soon became habitual:

- the teacher chooses a teller;
- the teller moves to the storyteller's chair;
- the teller tells the story using verbal signals to open and close it;
- the teacher presides over a discussion of the story by class members and teller;
- the teacher closes the discussion and chooses the next teller

### 1.2.1 The raw transcript of 'The Bear'

Mrs. B: right/ a volunteer.../James/ come on

J : well / this railway/ that is notorious for bringing circus trains through/ and this was in the eighteen hundreds/ and it was a thriving station/ 'nd every so often they changed the guards/ every one of them/ so different / new/ people could get jobs/because unemployment in this town was not very--well--not very good/ so the old people retired readily ( steadily? ..*unclear*)/ and one day this train came along with all these circus animals / and they're ...opened them up to water the animals / and a bear escaped / and for several years it lived on small animals / and ...a few times it took a few men from the station/ 'n one day there was a guard change / 'n this new guard came / 'n he was cocky/ 'n he ...the people said / 'watch out for the bear'/ and they gave him a gun and he says 'I won't need a gun' / threw it back at them/ went into the little station hut/ and then/ a coupla days on/ he shouted 'bear/ bear/ quick gi' me a gun'/ and they all ran to save him/ and there was no bear/ he did it again/

PP: (*whispering*)

J: wait!

PP: (*muttering*)

Mrs.B: shsh!

J: there was no bear/ next coupla days/ bear broke into the back of the thing/ smashed all the bricks in / and eat-ate- the man up/ that's it

P: false

P: false

J: it's true/ ha ha ha

P: false

Mrs.B.: where'd you get the story from?

J: what? I was told it

Mrs.B: how'd you know it was true then?

PP: (*general talk*)

J: we've seen the hole in the back of the hut

Mrs. B.: *who's* seen the hole?

J: we have haven't we? (*appealing to Jeremy and Michael*) 'aven't we?  
'aven't we? (*raising his voice*)

P (*Jeremy*): ...(unclear) basically it was only a small hole

Mrs.B.: yes/ but where's this hut?

PP: (*general talk*)

### 1.2.2 Implicit rules for interaction

1. The teacher is in charge throughout.
2. A teller, when selected by the teacher, must tell a story.
3. Once chosen, the teller moves to sit in the storyteller's chair.
4. The storyteller alone has the right to be heard until s/he signals the end of the story has been reached.
5. When the story has been told, the listeners can discuss it until the teacher calls a halt/ chooses the next teller.

All participants soon became aware of these rules which were easily established because they were not very different from those of many other English activities such as book-sharing. Nevertheless, rule 2. was challenged once and broken on another occasion; rule 4. was also broken several times, as it was during the telling of 'The Bear'.

### 1.2.3 Teller-audience interaction

As 'The Bear' (1) shows, the members of the class listened silently to James, until he announced the repetition of the new guard's trick, ridiculing the older people. At this point, I was struck by the similarity of 'The Bear' to Aesop's fable, 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf'. There was some whispering amongst the pupils and some mouthing of the word 'false'; later, when the telling was finished, this was the first word spoken by several of them. It is possible that some of the class shared my thoughts, since they were familiar with Aesop's fables from primary school and would certainly have regarded them as 'not true'. If they were not thinking of Aesop, then they might have doubted the truth of the story simply because they recognised triple repetition as a traditional folktale device often used in modern fiction for young children. In the talk following his performance, James maintained that his story *was* true on the grounds that he, Jeremy and Michael had seen the hole in the wall of an actual old station hut, implying that this *was* the hut in his story. Jeremy was not prepared to back him unequivocally and the class did not seem convinced.

### 1.2.4 The intertextual context of 'The Bear'

James, disturbed by the audience's interruption, tried to forestall comment by saying, 'wait', then, once Mrs. B. had quietened the class, making a dash for the end of his story, presumably telescoping the events he had intended to mention. The eating of the guard by the bear is a departure



from the pattern of Aesop's tale though his moral does apply to 'The Bear':

*'A scaremonger gains nothing by raising false alarms. He merely makes people disbelieve him when he does speak the truth.'* (Aesop 1954: 158).

Beside Aesop's fable, there is another possible textual antecedent for James's story, namely the well known modern myth about the exotic beast (e.g. panther) which escapes from captivity and lives in the wild, occasionally preying on people (Brunvand 1987).

#### 1.2.5 The emergent nature of the telling

A telling, a performed narrative event, is discursive; its exact shape cannot safely be predicted because it results from the interaction between teller and audience. James's audience challenged the rules for interaction when they started whispering to one another, before he had finished. This challenge was a sign that they had been listening to and assessing his performance. Up to this point, both audience and teller had focused on the form of the message, so the telling had the characteristics of a 'full performance' (Bauman, 1986, op.cit.), i.e. an enactment of the poetic function of language (Jakobson, 1960, op.cit.). After the audience had started whispering, James's composure was clearly disturbed; he said, 'Wait!' and his focus moved from making the telling convincing to finishing as quickly as possible. He seemed to want to escape from the role of teller as quickly as he could; since his focus was now on his own

feelings, the function of the telling moved from poetic to emotive, from aesthetic to expressive (Hymes, 1964, op.cit.). (See p.201 Chapter Five).

## 2. Six Textual analyses of 'The Bear'

### 2.1 The teller's task

A telling is a performance event and therefore James's skill as a performer and his communicative, specifically narrative, competence were foregrounded, as he was himself (Bauman, 1986, op.cit.). His task was complex: using language appropriate to his mixed audience, he had to create a coherent narrative text which would capture and hold their interest, converting what was in his own mind into a spoken narrative which conjured up ideas and images in the minds of his listeners and ensured that they wanted to know how the story would end. He had to use conventions which would enable his audience to recognise that they were listening to a particular kind of story and enable them, in imagination, to enter the world of his story in both its physical and its psychological manifestations. In addition, he had to manage the phonological aspects of speech, which I do not go into in this account. I now re-present the transcript of his telling as an idealised story text, with all the hesitations, self-corrections and audience responses removed and the whole divided into T units. I then demonstrate the application of the six analyses, discussed in Chapter Seven, to this transcript.

## 2.2 The idealised transcript: 'The Bear' (2)

### 'The Bear'

1. well this railway that is notorious for bringing circus trains through
2. and this was in the eighteen hundreds
3. and it was a thriving station
4. 'nd every so often they changed the guards every one of them so new different  
people could get jobs because unemployment in this town was not very good
5. 'nd the old people retired readily (steadily?\*)
6. and one day this train came along with all these circus animals
7. and they opened them up to water the animals
8. and a bear escaped
9. and for several years it lived on small animals
10. and a few times it took a few men from the station
11. 'n one day there was a guard change
12. 'n this new guard came
13. 'n he was young
14. 'n he was cocky
15. the people said 'watch out for the bear'
16. and they gave him a gun
17. and he says 'I won't need a gun'
18. threw it back at them
19. went in the little station hut
20. and then a coupla days on he shouted 'bear bear quick gi' me a gun'
21. and they all ran to save him
22. and there was no bear
23. he did it again a couple of days on
24. there was no bear
25. next coupla days bear broke into the back of the thing
26. smashed all the bricks in
27. and ate the man up
28. that's it (\* unclear)

## 2.3 The textual analyses

The stories were analysed with regard to:

- (i) textual coherence,
- (ii) use of formal/informal language,
- (iii) use of conversational language,
- (iv) use of 'written language',

- (v) narrative structure,
- (vi) genre.

(i) Analysis of textual coherence in 'The Bear '(2)

I analysed the textual coherence of 'The Bear (2)' using the system outlined in Chapter Seven (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, op.cit.; Numan, 1993, op.cit.). My findings were as follows:

Grammatical cohesion: additive conjunctions occur at the beginning of most clauses, two causal conjunctions in 4 and temporal conjunctions in 20 and 25, linking the piece together as a whole.

Lexical Cohesion establishes the world of the story concretely through iterative forms :

repetition: train/trains, he/he, bear/bear, gun/gun, few(times)/ few (men), guard/guard;

the use of superordinates : circus animals/animals, animals/bear;

the use of a general word as a substitute for a noun : 'thing' (25) for 'station hut' ;

through collocations which resonate with pupils' shared cultural knowledge: railway, trains, station, guards, guard change; jobs, unemployment; circus animals, bear.

### Anaphoric and cataphoric referential cohesion :

anaphoric cohesive ties are most obvious in TUs 11-28, which convey the plot structure:

'he' (13&14) refers back to 'new guard' (12);

'they' (16) refers back to 'the people' (15);

'he' (17) and 'I' refer back to 'the new guard' (12);

'it' (18) refers back to 'gun' (17) and 'them' to 'the people'(15);

'it' (23) refers back to 'he shouted 'bear bear quick gimme a gun' (20)

There is only one instance of cataphoric cohesion: 'it'(3) anticipating 'station' (3).

Anaphoric cohesion is not used in 1-10 with the ease and certainty shown in 11-28. For example, there is no explicit antecedent for 'them ' in the following passage:

6. and one day this train came along with all these animals

7. and they opened them up to water the animals

8. and a bear escaped

It seems that James had in mind, but did not say, something like 'cages'. However, his audience showed no sign of noticing the error or of

misunderstanding him because of it, perhaps because their attention was focused on the imminent sensational event, the bear's escape. This analysis shows that he was largely successful in creating a coherent text.

(ii) Analysis of the use of formal/informal language in 'The Bear (2)'

Throughout his performance, James uses a variety of English he feels comfortable with: Standard English (SE), spoken with a regional accent. This is the variety used by his parents, most of his teachers and his peers, some of whom also use regional dialect forms. SE is the dominant variety of English used in education generally and his use of it means that James claims some standing in the classroom, particularly with his teachers. Apart from the colloquial form, 'cocky' (14), a better choice for his peers than the more formal 'arrogant' would have been, James stays with SE in the narrative clauses. When he uses direct speech for the young guard, however, he chooses an informal pronunciation, 'gimme'(20) which links directly in to his own informal speech in the talk which follows his performance: 'we 'ave, 'aven't we?' ( see 'The Bear (1)' above) as he raises his voice. These informal uses of language show James claiming solidarity with his peers, away from adult influence. His performance illustrates the way in which native speakers can move from one level of formality to another, according to the need they feel at any particular moment to be assured of either status or solidarity (Milroy & Milroy 1985, op.cit.).

(iii) Analysis of the use of conversational language in 'The Bear(2)'

Spoken English and written English cannot be regarded as totally separate; they are two different modes of communication, standing on the same continuum (see Chapter Four). However, it is possible to isolate the features of 'typically oral' and 'typically written' language, using particular paradigms. A number of linguists have chosen natural spontaneous conversation as the oral paradigm and there is general agreement amongst them on the **typical linguistic features of conversational language**. I now list these agreed features in summary form and give instances of each, taken from 'The Bear (2)' (Chafe 1974, op.cit.; Ochs 1979, op.cit.; Brown & Yule, 1983 op.cit.; Stubbs, 1983 op.cit.; Halliday, 1989 op.cit.).

1. **Conversation does not usually consist of sentences but of utterances containing clauses. There is a tendency to string together paratactic clauses rather than to use subordination; the most common connective used is 'and'.** In 19 out of a total of 28 TUs, this is true of 'The Bear'.

2. **There is often also a juxta-position of clauses with no explicit link at all.** This is true of 18 & 19 and of 23, 24, 25, 26;

e.g. 18. threw it back at them

19. went in the little station hut

3. **There is a deletion of referents, including the subjects of clauses.** This is true of TU s 18, 19, 26, 27.
4. **Generalised vocabulary is used** e.g. 'thing' (25).
5. **Passive constructions are infrequent; instead, we find active constructions with indeterminate group agents** e.g. they changed the guards (4), they opened them up...(7) , they gave him a gun (16).
6. **Speakers tend to refine their meanings as they go along.** This process is apparent in 4: '..they changed the guards **every one of them** so new **different** people....'
7. **Speakers commonly repeat syntactic form**  
e.g. 13. 'n he was young  
14. 'n he was cocky

This analysis clearly shows that, most of the time, James used the language of natural spontaneous conversation in his telling. This is not surprising, since he spoke without script or notes and responded to unexpected reactions from the audience, as he would have had to do in a conversation. His audience was very familiar and he had spent many hours in conversation with some of them, both in and out of school. Also, although the performance was part of a classroom lesson and the audience included two adults (both factors that one would assume would tend to



make the occasion more formal) the classroom in question was, as I have indicated, run informally.

(iv) The use of 'written language' in 'The Bear (2)'

Following Halliday's method described in Chapter Seven, page p.206, I calculated the lexical density (LD) of 'The Bear (2)' by dividing the total number of lexical words it contained by the total number of clauses. The LD of the whole text is 2.6. However, the text falls naturally into three sections, each of which, I found, has a distinctive LD:

1-5 The frame, providing non-narrative socio-historical background to the story, LD : 4.4;

6-10 Episode One, a narrative episode providing historical background to the rest of the story, LD: 3.02;

11-28 Episodes Two, Three, Four and Five, the main narrative, LD: 1.9;

In 1-5, the LD is highest and complex grammatical structures are found (4 contains an adverbial phrase, an adjectival phrase and two adverbial clauses, one of reason, one of purpose). In this non-narrative section, James packs in social and historical information about the community where the story takes place, sufficient to explain the action of the main narrative carried by 11-28.;

In 6-10, he provides reasons for the action which is to ensue ( the bear's escape) and so this passage is liberally sprinkled with explanatory adverbial phrases; there are, however, no subordinate clauses and the LD is lower than in 1-5.;

In 11-28, he concentrates on the plot line with virtually no elaboration and so the LD is very much lower here than elsewhere in the text.

Thus we see that, when he wanted to provide condensed information as a background to his story, James drew upon a wider vocabulary and more complex syntax than he needed to use in ordinary conversation with his friends, i.e. he used 'written language'.

(v) Analysis of the narrative structure of 'The Bear (2)'

To analyse the narrative structure, I used Labov's narrative categories (see Chapter Five) (Labov, 1972, op.cit.). In 'The Bear', which, like most of the other stories in the data, is not a personal experience narrative, but an invented story, there is no abstract or coda and TUs are mostly multifunctional. These findings coincide with those of Fox . I set out below an analysis of 'The Bear', using the analytical lay-out employed by Fox (Fox 1993, op.cit.). In the columns on the right hand side, the narrative functions of each TU are recorded; A indicates a complicating action, B an orientation and C an evaluation.

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. well this railway that is notorious for                              | B C   |
| bringing circus trains through  |       |
| 2. and this was in the eighteen hundreds                                | B     |
| 3. and it was a thriving station  | B C   |
| 4. 'nd every so often they changed the                                  | B C   |
| guards every one of them so new different                               |       |
| people could get jobs because unemployment                              |       |
| in this town was not very good  |       |
| 5. 'nd the old people retired readily                                   | B C   |
| 6. and one day this train came along with all these circus animals      | A B C |
| 7. and they opened them up to water the animals                         | A B C |
| 8. and a bear escaped   | A B C |
| 9. and for several years it lived on small animals                      | B C   |
| 10. and a few times it took a few men from the station                  | A B C |
| 11. 'n one day there was a guard change                                 | A B C |
| 12. 'n this new guard came  | A B   |
| 13. 'n he was young   | B C   |
| 14. 'n he was cocky   | B C   |
| 15. the people said 'watch out for the bear'                            | A B   |
| 16. and they gave him a gun   | A B   |
| 17. and he says 'I won't need a gun'                                    | A B C |
| 18. threw it back at them   | A     |
| 19. went in the little station hut                                      | A B   |
| 20. and then a coupla days on he shouted 'bear bear quick gi' me a gun' | A B C |
| 21. and they all ran to save him  | A C   |
| 22. and there was no bear   | B C   |

23. he did it again a couple of days on	A C
24. there was no bear	B C
25. next coupla days bear broke into the back of the thing	A B C
26. smashed all the bricks in	A B C
27. and ate the man up	A B C
28. that's it	CLOSURE

### Complicating actions and resolutions

Clauses with narrative functions relate actions and a sequence of such clauses creates a plot structure through complicating actions, throwing up problems to be resolved by the ending. In 'The Bear', eleven TUs do not have narrative functions, instead, they provide setting information, either because they contain verbs which indicate iterative actions, as in 4 'changed' or because they indicate states rather than actions, as in 9, 'lived'. The remaining clauses, which do have a narrative function complicate the action, creating the problem to be solved, that is the attitude of the new guard to the help he is offered, given that the bear is in the vicinity. The eating of the guard by the bear resolves the problem; the ending is the logical outcome of his foolhardy behaviour.

## Orientations

The orientation category provides details about the identity of characters, about spatial or temporal dimensions, about props, attributes, behaviour or social information, which create an explicit representation of a material world and give the story credibility. The most heavily used kinds of orientation in 'The Bear' are those which refer to props, i.e. objects, including animals (23 instances), attributes (13 instances) and time (9 instances). A good proportion of the first two of these occur in the first four TUs, where James is engaged in creating a credible story world. The temporal orientations are used, first, to situate the story in a vague historical past, which means that its veracity cannot be questioned, then to stress the escape of the bear 'one day' (6) , to remind listeners of its lurking presence 'for several years' and its attacks on people 'a few times' ( 9,10) thus, building suspense through the narrative. Finally, the risky behaviour of the new guard is emphasised by the triple pattern of 20-27, a convention drawn from folktale.

## Evaluations

Labov regarded evaluation as the most important function of all '*Evaluative devices say to us: this was terrifying, dangerous, weird, wild, crazy; or amusing, hilarious, wonderful; more generally that it was strange, uncommon or unusual-that is, worth reporting* (Labov, 1972, op.cit.: 371). Through evaluation, the narrator indicates what

makes the narrative reportable as far as s/he is concerned, using intensifiers (expressive phonology and gestures, quantifiers, lists and various kinds of repetition) which accentuate the narrative events, comparators (imperatives, negatives, futures, modal verbs and comparatives), which imply comparison of what did happen with what might have happened but did not, explicatives, which explain events and correlatives, which indicate that two processes were going on at the same time.

In 'The Bear', intensifiers, are used 21 times, including 12 repetitions; explicatives of various kinds occur 20 times, comparators are used 6 times, correlatives once only. The bias of evaluation in favour of intensification and explication reflects James's need to explain how jobs on the railway were shared out at a time of high unemployment. This explanation is crucial because the point of the whole story is that the young guard, who benefited from the altruism of the older men, did not respect them, did not heed their advice and so died.

Labov (1972, op.cit.) found that evaluation usually entails complex syntax. In 'The Bear (1)', the most complex syntax, is in TU 4:

'nd every so often they changed the guards every one of them so new different people could get jobs because unemployment in this town was not very good

This TU is clearly evaluative because it explains the unselfish way the older men treated the younger ones, with regard to jobs; their altruism was unusual and therefore reportable. It is identifiable as evaluative because of its complex syntax.

(vi) Generic analysis of 'The Bear (2)'

To complete my analysis, I categorised 'The Bear' according to Warlow's taxonomy of fiction (Warlow, 1977, op.cit.). The taxonomy was designed for works produced by adult professionals, published and distributed commercially whereas my data were created by young apprentice story-makers for a restricted public of peers and teacher in the classroom, a close speech community, where shared meanings were not always explicitly expressed. I therefore adapted Warlow's classification criteria by taking into account background knowledge and other versions of a story wherever these were available, as well as the slightest traces in a story of the characteristics of a category or a story type (see Fig. 9.6, p.375(d)). 'The Bear(2)' takes place 'in the eighteen hundreds' in a non-localised British setting involving railway, trains, a station and guards, jobs and unemployment. Since it contains folkloric elements (Aesop, 1954, op.cit.; Brunvand, 1987, op.cit.) it is clear that, despite his insistence that his story is 'true', James is not describing a realistic historical story world. A bear surviving in the wild in Britain, even a century ago, would have been an unlikely phenomenon. I have therefore classified 'The Bear (2)' as category G: a modern derivative of a traditional folktale in a modern setting.

### 3. Discussion

The six analyses of 'The Bear' uncovered James's communicative and narrative competence. He constructed a text that was largely, though not perfectly coherent, adapted the formality of his language to cultivate solidarity and status in the eyes of his audience and, whilst operating in the oral mode, used 'written language' as well as language typical of spontaneous conversation. He composed a well structured narrative, creating a plot with an ending which was not imposed but embedded in the action preceding it; he elaborated this narrative with orientation and evaluation, showing his tacit awareness that narrative is a discursive form. His text has been shown to have an inter-textual context which situates it, and James himself, in the chain of storytelling in both oral and written modes with roots in the distant past (Bakhtin 1986, op.cit.).

The syntactical complexity of the language of clauses with evaluative function, discovered by Labov (1972, op.cit.), was identified in the analysis of lexical density as a sign of 'written language' in a spoken text (Halliday, 1989, op.cit.). This coincidence of the two different approaches to narrative analysis points directly to the concept of inter-textuality discussed by Meek (1991, op.cit.) and Fox (1993, op.cit.) (see Chapter Five) as well as the narratologists (see Chapter Seven). Inter- textuality is important, in my inquiry, because most of the pupils' stories are re-tellings of other stories or contain elements of others. James showed no awareness of the intertext I have identified, insisting he 'was told' the story which was 'true'. My speculation, based on



background knowledge and textual evidence is that his story was a remembered primary school assembly or Sunday school address. The moral content and syntactical complexity of 1-10 would not have been unusual in the speech of professional adults in such contexts. The fact that James had difficulty with the language of the frame ('notorious' and 'unemployment') shows that he was not fully in control of the ideas he was handling. His bias towards explicatives and his restricted use of comparators, which would have encouraged the audience to imagine alternatives, confirm my interpretation. If I am right, then James had received the story as 'written language' in spoken form and was trying to live up to what he remembered.

I applied the Stage One analyses to all the story data and, in the course of this work, became aware of the different significances they had as works of fiction. This awareness was the basis of my Stage Two analyses of the public stories, exemplified in Chapter Nine.

## **CHAPTER NINE:**

### Three Significances in Ten Exemplars

#### Introduction

This chapter describes and discusses the second stage analysis of the public stories (see Chapter Seven, p.217). In order to sharpen my focus on the narrative competences of tellers, I select ten exemplars for fuller consideration and briefly summarise each. Then, I show how the significances of credibility, of audience-awareness and of the use of 'written language' in the exemplars, were thrown into relief by the textual analyses. Finally, I discuss possible reasons for the different ways in which these three significances are manifested in different stories.

#### 1. The ten exemplars

The ten exemplars are the products of seven solo performances, four by boys and three by girls, and three collaborative performances, two by pairs of girls and one by a pair of boys. I included five girls and six boys from the class; two of the girls performed both as a pair and separately. Those who performed early in the sequence, while storytelling in the classroom was a novel activity, faced a rather different situation from those who performed towards the end, when the activity had become familiar and especially from those who took the storyteller's chair voluntarily. Accordingly, I have chosen a spread

of performances, including first and last and some from the middle of the sequence. My selection is weighted towards the end of the sequence because it was at this stage that two personal experience stories were volunteered, following one which had been elicited and strongly supported by Mrs. B. I felt that this run of three tellings embodied a significant change in the nature of the sessions, which merits comment.

### 1.1 Brief summaries of the ten exemplars

I have numbered each story in the order in which it was originally told, given it a title, a label, e.g. PILOT, to be used as a simplified form of reference and have added the name(s) of the teller(s).

#### Story 1: ' The Phantom Pilot ' PILOT (Magnus)

A man is driving down a road in C---- when he spots another man, who has cuts on his face and is wearing a bomber-jacket, thumbing a lift at the side of the road. The driver stops and gives the hitch-hiker a lift to B---- where there was an aerodrome during the war. When the passenger gets out, the driver is puzzled to see Spitfires parked on what he knows is now a derelict aerodrome. He drives to his local pub and tells his mates there what has happened. They don't believe him, so he drives them over to B----and finds they are right; there are no planes. Bewildered, he drives home and then sees some Spitfires crashing into C-- Hill .

Story 4: 'Grip the Thief' GRIP (Gary)

A dog was trained very successfully to be a pick-pocket. The man who trained him, a thief himself, became greedy for more money and tried to become a highway-man. He was arrested and thrown into jail. The dog, left alone, was adopted by another man who was a clergyman.

Story 6: 'The Bear' BEAR (James)

A bear escapes from a circus train and lives in the wild, preying on animals and humans. An arrogant young railway guard falls victim to the bear.

Story 7: 'Escape' ESCAPE (Chris & Michael)

The dangerous adventures of a group of boys exploring underground drainage tunnels. They become thoroughly frightened but escape unharmed.

Story 17: 'The Footballer' FOOTBALL (Kate & Gaynor)

A little boy had a new football. He was playing with it in the garden and became bored because the garden was small. So he went out to the nearby school playing-field. When his mother came to tell him his tea was ready, he was nowhere to be seen. Eventually, she found him on the football pitch, in goal.

Story 22: 'The Twins' TWINS (Sarah & Shelley)

The twin daughters of a family living on a remote island are described as 'blond and pretty' and 'dark and ugly'. The dark ugly one loves a boy who goes off to war. When he comes back, she thinks he will marry her but instead he chooses her sister. Thwarted, she takes her revenge by stabbing and shooting her sister as she is getting dressed for her

wedding. In spite of her efforts, the blond twin survives to marry, then goes away to New York. Years later, the dark ugly twin goes mad, smashes all the mirrors in the house and is later found dead, with two stab wounds in her head. Three detectives provide contradictory explanations for what happened.

Story 23: 'Hospital Story' HOSPITAL (Dean)

Dean is due to have a minor eye operation. His mother phones the hospital and finds out that there is a bed free for him. He is admitted to a ward where he makes friends with another boy. The two of them play games and read comics together and get told off by a nurse. The next morning, Dean's operation takes place. Later that day, having recovered, he is discharged from hospital.

Story 24: 'Casualty' CASUALTY (Karen)

Karen is knocked down by a lorry one evening, outside her primary school. She is severely injured, suffering many broken bones and is admitted to hospital for treatment and re-habilitation. She has to stay in hospital for over six months and have eighteen months off school.

Story 26: 'Accidents' ACCIDENTS (Shelley)

As a result of a fall, which happened while she was playing with friends, Shelley damaged her wrist and had to spend several hours waiting for treatment in the casualty department of a local hospital. In a second fall - from a pony - she dislocated her shoulder which was then manipulated back into position in hospital. There was a prolonged period of convalescence. At the time of her performance, she was still suffering the consequences of these accidents.

Story 28: 'Grandad's Return' RETURN (Sarah)

When he was a little boy during the war, Sarah's father was playing upstairs at home with his sister. The children were alone in the house,

because their mother had gone shopping. Their father returned unexpectedly from the navy and took the two children downstairs to tell them about his adventures. Suddenly they heard a bang upstairs. On investigating, they discovered that the ceiling had fallen down in the children's bedroom, just where they had been playing a few minutes earlier.

## 2. The significance of credibility

### 2.1 Truth and fiction

As I indicated in describing the storytelling lesson context (p.223) the opposition of truth to fiction was introduced by Mrs. B., the teacher. She told the pupils to be prepared to discuss how they decided the truth-value of the stories they heard. In the first instance, this instruction was a control strategy used because she was not certain that the pupils would listen to each other if they were not obliged to report on their responses. Later, she dropped the strategy, perhaps because she saw that it could be unhelpful-as in James's case - or perhaps because she observed that, most of the time, they *did* listen to each other. Several times, she used the formulation, 'true or false?' when a story was finished; this connects fiction with lying and therefore with the idea that fiction is, if not morally reprehensible, somehow inferior to 'true stories'. As we saw, James was very anxious that his story should not be thought 'false'; he pointed to the evidence of an actual hole in an actual old station hut, as proof of his story's authenticity.

The idea of truth and fiction as completely separate is misleading. In everyday life, there is a constant ebb and flow relationship between makebelieve and what we think of as reality; this relationship is apparent in daydreaming and in all the plausible narratives we construct about what we observe but cannot explain. Fiction has been described as a convention of communication and it occurs whenever we convert experience of any sort into narrative. We fictionalise experience, for example, simply by creating episodes with beginnings and endings; actual experience does not happen in episodic form, nor does memory preserve it in that way. The characters in narratives, too, are conventions, created to convey ideas that the narrator wants to communicate. This is true, even when a character represents the teller's self. Thus, all the pupils' narratives can be called fictions, although some of them relate remembered personal experiences; they are all stories (Britton, 1971, op.cit.; Harding, 1977, op.cit.; Smith, 1968, op.cit.; Wells, 1986 op.cit., Meek, 1991, op.cit.). As tellers, the pupils had to create consistent illusory worlds for their listeners to enter, worlds they would believe in whilst they were listening to the story. I regarded the creation of credibility as a sign of narrative competence in tellers.

## 2.2 Story openings creating a credible story world

The opening words of each classroom telling had to bridge the gap between the context and situation of performance (the English lesson in the classroom) and the particular imaginary world the teller had in mind; at the same time, these words had to contribute to the credibility

of the story and provide a setting within which complicating actions could begin. Three different approaches to carrying out these tasks were used:

- three of the ten exemplars begin, like 'The Bear', with a description, an extended orientation statement;
- three authenticate the story by referring to its source;
- three provide a compressed narrative framework which is a historical background for the focal events of the story;
- I now describe and then discuss these three kinds of openings.

#### 2.2.1 Descriptions using extended orientation statements: (Magnus, Sarah, Kate)

Each of these three tellers, as in James's BEAR, builds a credible setting for his or her story through orientations referring to elements the audience know, or know of, from their own life experience.

Magnus creates a striking scene on a local road :

right-there was this bloke/ it's in C----/ he's driving along up C--- Road/ and he sees this man-- with a bomber jacket on/ and his face is all cut up/ and he's walking with a limp/ and he's thumbing a lift [ PILOT ]



He uses identification, spatial and attributive orientations twice each and the behaviour category three times. He creates suspense by raising, in the minds of the audience, the central question the story must answer: who was the strange looking hitch hiker? From this point the complicating actions can begin.

Sarah establishes the physical setting and identifies six characters who are to appear:

before the last war there was a small island/ but it gradually drifted apart/ and on the island there lived a family of six/ there was mad maniac grandma who was religious/ a mother a father who was a fisherman/ a five year old who wasn't old enough to go to religious ceremonies/ and two twins/ one was dark and ugly/ one was blond and pretty[ TWINS].

Here, there are six identifications, nine attributives, two spatial and one temporal orientation. The list of bizarre characters on the remote island is designed to provoke curiosity in the listeners' minds, to be satisfied by the ensuing action of the plot .

Kate provides a description of the central character and his feelings:

once there was this little boy called Tim/ he was about three or four years old/ one Christmas he got a new football/ he wasn't allowed to go out of the garden/ and he got fed up 'cause the garden wasn't very big [FOOTBALL].

Here, two spatial, two temporal, four attributive orientations and one naming a prop are used, with the apparent intent of making the audience wonder what the small boy will do to overcome his frustration.

### 2.2.2 Authentication of the story: Sarah, Gary, Chris

Sarah and Gary refer to their sources as implicit guarantees of their truthfulness: living relatives and a book, respectively:

this is a true story/ and it happened to my dad a long time ago/ and his sister Madge  
[RETURN]

right- this story's about Grip/ the dog who was a thief/ this thief called Tom Gerenard/  
or something like that/ this story- what it said in the book/ was three hundred years old/  
right this is three hundred years old in London/ there was this thief called Tom/  
Gerenard/ I'll call him Tom from now on/ 'cause it's easier [GRIP]

Chris simultaneously stresses his story's authenticity, through the folkloric 'friend-of a-friend' device, distancing himself and his narrative partner from it:

right/ now one of me old friends that-from where I used to live/ told us this story/ and  
he was dead scared/ so we don't know whether its true/ but what he says-I'll tell it  
[ESCAPE]

Each of these tellers points out that the events of the story can be vouched for; they also use orientations to identify characters involved in the action and, in Gary's case, some details about the spatial and temporal location of the action as well.

### 2.2.3 Providing a historical background for the story: Dean, Karen, Shelley

These tellers authenticate their stories simply by being present and saying they are talking about their own lives:

we were told to phone up on Sunday mornin' from 9.15 to 9.30/ to see if bed was free in 'ospital/ we phoned up/ I was in bed when me mum phoned up/ and she come/ and told me/ well I were a bit scared 'o course [HOSPITAL] (Dean)

well I used to live in C----/ and me best mate/ Tracey W---/ she were ever so tall/ 'n this little kid ran by 'er/ and kicked 'er/ 'n she sort of beat 'im up/ 'n she got expelled/ 'n she were the only-like-mate who I hung around with/ 'n when she 'ad gone there was no one t'ang around with or anything/ 'n I didn't talk t'anybody or anything/ and I stopped doing me work / 'n I-I were ever so lonely [CASUALTY] (Karen)

I was down my friend's house/ and Keeley arrived / and we started playing Judo/ 'n she says she'd trip me up/ I didn't want to / but she got hold of me arm and she tripped me up/ and I landed on me wrist/ and it started to hurt [ACCIDENTS] (Shelley).

Dean uses three identifications, two attributives, one prop, two temporal and two spatial orientations;

Karen uses three identifications, five attributives, one behavioural, one temporal and one spatial orientation;

Shelley uses, one identification, one behavioural, one prop and two spatial orientations.

### 2.3 The use of orientations throughout the text to create credible imaginary worlds

Only three stories begin with extended orientation statements but the tellers of all the exemplars use orientations as they unfold their stories (see Fig.9.1, p.\*\*\*a). Three texts contain all seven orientation categories and seven contain all but the social group category, which appears in BEAR (James) five times. The tellers' choices vary

according to what interests them in the particular imaginary world they are creating .

Thus, we see that where a story has a complicated plot involving a cast of characters who must be clearly differentiated from one another, identifications are heavily used e.g. TWINS and GRIP; where the action of a story moves to different locations, the spatial category is used most often, e.g. PILOT, HOSPITAL, GRANDAD and ACCIDENTS; BEAR, ESCAPE, HOSPITAL, CASUALTY, ACCIDENT and FOOTBALL all use the props category quite extensively, since naming the objects which surround or impinge in some way on the protagonists conjures up their world effectively. Temporal orientations are used alongside spatial ones in HOSPITAL(Dean) and CASUALTY (Karen), since, in each, the action moves first into and then within a hospital, each move located in time and its duration often estimated. Dean's temporal orientations are mostly personal, e.g. 'about two hours after I had me light breakfast'. In Karen's case, time is more often impersonally, arithmetically, expressed, e.g. 'one week and three days', 'a whole year and half'.

## 2.4 Findings

The tellers of all ten exemplars bridge the gap between performance situation and imaginary world by claiming, in the various ways demonstrated, that their story is to be believed; all use orientation extensively throughout their stories, showing their concern to make specific references to time and place and to identify characters and objects

explicitly, thus giving them apparent material substance. Knowing how to create credibility was a narrative competence shared by all these tellers.

### 3. The significance of audience awareness

Ross Chambers defines fiction as '*the name we give to narrative moves that, in a given situation, produce authority through seduction*' (Chambers, 1984: 219). Even though it appears to be a monologue or duologue, a classroom telling is a discursive event in which meaning is the joint creation of two parties: the teller(s) and the audience, as it is in a conversation between two individuals or in the communication between an author and his/her reader. Recognising that the creation of meaning is a dialogical process, was, thus, an important narrative competence in tellers. The pressures of the performance situation made it unlikely that they would forget the audience for, although the rules implied that listeners should be silent throughout, the absence of interruption including glances, gestures and facial expressions of disbelief could not be absolutely guaranteed; there was usually some voiced response, question or discussion at the end of a telling, as in James's case (see p.229).

In any story-telling performance, the performer, whether soloist or collaborator, becomes the focus of attention in the room, available, like the stories s/he tells, for assessment by the audience (Bauman, 1986, op.cit.). In the classroom, studied tellers were faced with the problem of switching from normal classroom interaction into performance mode, a problem which had both social and discursive dimensions. They had to find ways to induce the audience to listen to their stories and care about them and, at the same time, to listen to and appreciate them as tellers.

They needed narrative authority which, if achieved, would not necessarily outlast the telling but might affect their future standing in the eyes of the audience. All members of the class had a shared history; there were certainly whispered scandals, jokes and open secrets, circulating about everyone, as in any institution. The tellers knew that the stories they performed and possible stories about their performances would become part of this gossip amongst their peers and even in the staff-room. Thus, establishing narrative authority had social importance and it had to be done largely through the words that were used.

Showing awareness of the audience in the words they used involved tellers in narrative strategies to attract and hold their attention. The use of orientations, described above, is one such strategy. Others were:

- choosing story material which would appeal to the audience;
- creating a plot structure through the use of complicating actions and resolutions which would create suspense and draw listeners through the story to the end;
- using evaluations to show their own perspective on the narrative, implying that the audience should share it (Labov & Waletzky, 1967, *op.cit.*; Labov, 1972, *op.cit.*).

### 3.1 Choice of story material

As the summaries of the exemplars show, the complete texts were very different from one another. However, their subject matter revealed a consensus amongst the tellers about what was appropriate to their audience. Death and the danger of death, pain, injury, signs of the supernatural including ghosts, omens and lucky escapes from disaster are all prominent, confirming Labov's view, developed following his research amongst the young black storytellers of New York: that such themes are transcultural (Labov, 1972, op.cit.). Since the tellers' audience was one they were each part of when they were not performing, it has to be assumed that, with regard to content, they were audience-aware (see: Titles of all solo and collaborative performances, p.376).

### 3.2 Use of complicating actions and resolutions

Apart from TWINS (Shelley and Sarah) and ESCAPE (Chris & Michael), all the exemplars have complicating actions with resolutions that grow out of them and therefore have well-formed plot structures, in Labov's terms, although the transcript of PILOT (Magnus) is probably difficult for a reader without prior contextual knowledge to understand. TWINS is an attempted re-telling of a detective novel with a very complicated plot and many characters. On account of confusions of anaphoric reference, it became extremely difficult for the listeners to follow the plot and, at the end of the performance, several of the girls, clearly interested, asked for elucidation. Mrs. B. pieced the story together for them, with help from Shelley. This does not mean that creating a well-structured plot, in

Labov's terms, was not within Shelley's or Sarah's narrative competence but rather that their model on this occasion was too long and complex to be used as such in an oral performance. The girls' other tellings (ACCIDENTS; RETURN) showed that they could create well-formed plot structures. Chris and Michael (ESCAPE) constructed a narrative where the final ending is an appropriate outcome of the initial complicating action. However, most of the text consists of descriptions conveying how it felt to be in the tunnel and there are three possible endings. Thus, Labov's criteria of a well-formed narrative structure are not really appropriate in this case. PILOT (Magnus) is an elliptical version of a story he had recorded a year earlier (see p.378). The ending of the present very brief version confirms the implied suspicions of the central character, that the hitch-hiker he had picked up was the ghost of an airman killed in a plane crash during the last war. A long opening providing historical background was used in the earlier version whereas here, it is omitted, possibly confusing some of the audience, though none of them asked for clarification.

### 3.2.1 Scripts

Dean, Karen and Shelley benefited from the fact that their narratives, all of which involved being a patient in hospital, were patterned on a basic 'hospital script' which would have been common knowledge amongst the audience, through personal, family or T.V. experience (Mandler, 1984). (Such cultural knowledge is comparable to the narrative schemas Gee found in Leona's stories. See Chapter Seven). All three used variations of this basic script: Dean's story covered a



pre-arranged one night stay to enable minor corrective eye surgery to be done, Shelley's covered visits to Accident and Emergency departments in two different hospitals but no overnight stay and Karen's concerned lengthy hospitalisation after a serious road accident, including emergency treatment, multiple operations and a period of rehabilitation. Once the audience had recognised what variant of the script was being followed, it can be assumed that it was easier for them to be drawn into predicting the outcome than it was with other tellers who were not following familiar scripts.

### 3.3 Use of evaluations

In the narratives Labov analysed, evaluation was sometimes external, sometimes embedded in the narration. Seven of the ten exemplars include external evaluations but embedded evaluations, involving departures from basic narrative syntax which do not interrupt the dramatic continuity of the narration, were much more common (see Fig.9.2, p.375b.).

#### 3.3.1 External evaluations

External evaluations stand outside the narrative, sometimes interrupting it, and are addressed directly to the audience. Magnus (PILOT) ends his telling with the words: 'that's it /think /good eh?' This is a way of asking for audience approval and, at the same time, forestalling disapproval in an intimate and jokey fashion. In five of the exemplars, there are early

references to the feelings of the central character, in the form of external evaluations: 'he got fed up', 'he was dead scared', 'I were a bit scared', 'I were ever so lonely' and 'it started to hurt'.

These references are important ways of signalling to the audience that the story to come is to be believed because the central character is vulnerable like them; they are appeals for empathy. When the teller uses the first person, he or she is helping the audience to recognise an irresistible bait: a proffered personal confidence. Chris & Michael (ESCAPE) use fourteen external evaluations in all, sometimes in the form of rhetorical questions to one another such as, 'like a room, weren't it?' sometimes with embedded evaluations included in them, e.g. 'so we don't know whether it's true' (which includes two comparators: a negative and an indirect question). All of these devices are designed to make it clear that they had nothing at all to do with the experience they are relating.

### 3.3.2 Embedded evaluations

Fig. 9.2 (p.375b) shows that the use made of the four major categories: Intensifiers, Comparators, Correlatives and Explicatives is much heavier in the 'autobiographical' stories than in any of the others. I now show some of the detailed ways in which embedded evaluations were used.

Intensifier: (*gestures, expressive phonology, quantifiers, repetitions, ritual utterances, lists*).

*Gestures*: the tellers of the four 'autobiographical' narratives all used gestures or miming, possibly re-living the experiences they were relating, as they spoke. Michael (ESCAPE) mimed stamping out flames, Shelley (ACCIDENTS) showed where a tourniquet was applied to her arm, 'just here', Karen (CASUALTY) used her legs as a visual aid as she explained the operations she had undergone and Dean (HOSPITAL) illustrated the nurse's anger towards himself and his friend by miming a cuffing gesture accompanied by a deictic: 'she said "get into bed" like this' . The other tellers hardly used gestures at all and tended to be generally less inclined to move about whilst speaking.

*Expressive phonology*: in the form of emphasis or raising the voice was used wherever direct speech dramatised the action or characterised protagonists, making the telling more lively; this was not exclusive to the 'autobiographical' narratives:

PILOT        19... ' I've just seen this real weird bloke...'

BEAR        20.....' bear bear quick gi'mme a gun '

GRIP        27.....' hey you stop' .....

Emphasis was used also to add particular implications to apparently neutral words:

In HOSPITAL:

- 62. I can remember going through the women's ward
- 63. didn't see owt though when going through the *women's ward*

Here, Dean stresses his repetition, provoking a laugh from the audience which he didn't get the first time he said 'women's ward' , so reinforcing his persona and possibly his social identity, as daring or risqué.

In ESCAPE:

- 26. ....they found this plastic
- 27. one of them just *happened* to have some matches on him
- 28. started burning it

Here, Michael uses an emphatic, sarcastic tone of voice in order to ridicule the behaviour of the boy with the matches.

*Quantifiers* were used in both 'autobiographical' stories and others:

- |        |                               |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| ESCAPE | 3. dead scared                |
|        | 20. really small              |
| PILOT  | 5. and his face is all cut up |

*Repetition* was used in every single story. This is not surprising, since repetition is an extremely common feature of speech. It enables those who wish to avoid silence to produce ample talk through automaticity

and through setting up paradigms for slotting in other speech items, as in ESCAPE:

- 13.      they found more of these rooms
- 14.      they found all sorts of things up there
- 15.      they found a little newt once

Repetition can help a speaker produce fluent speech, whilst formulating what to say next. (Tannen 1989). For example, Gary (GRIP) uses the expression, 'pats him on the head' at three points, in three incidents involving different characters and the same dog. Repetition of lexical items is also a way of ensuring coherence (Halliday, 1976, op. cit.), and a way for the narrator to keep track of the theme. Dean (HOSPITAL) provides an example, as he goes through various remembered attempts to anaesthetise him. The woven pattern of his repeating text is most easily perceived in the raw transcript:

/then nurse come in/ asked me if I wanted me premed yet/ and I went 'uh alright/ I'll have me premed'/ went to bed/ had me premed/ couldn't sleep/ they asked me for an injection/ but I said I didn't wannit/ so they gave me some medecine/ had this medecine/ first I 'ad pills/ and I couldn't swallow 'em/ I had two pills/ swallowed them in the end though/ 'n then didn't work/ for two hours I didn't go to sleep/ so they give me some medecine/

*Ritual utterances:* Kate's opening (FOOTBALL) resembles the oral formula for the beginning of a fairytale: 'once there was this little boy called Tim'; Dean's repetition of 'light breakfast' (HOSPITAL), an important sounding phrase, probably learned from the hospital menu has similar force.

*Lists* were sparingly used, the most noticeable being the list of characters recited by Sarah (TWINS) which made plain their impressive number and variety. Karen used two lists: of the destructive acts of the lorry she was run over by and of the repairs she endured (CASUALTY); these lists are important because they show how she was attacked by the adult world (the lorry) and how, as a consequence, she later became the centre of adult care and attention in hospital.

Comparators (*questions, negatives, imperatives, modals, comparatives and or-clauses*)

Figure 9.2. (p.375(b)) shows that in HOSPITAL, CASUALTY and ACCIDENTS, more comparators were used than any other kind of evaluation. In ESCAPE, their use is only surpassed by that of correlatives. Dean uses both *imperatives* and *negatives*, as he describes his opposition to the nurse's instructions and to the doctors' attempts to anaesthetise him:

HOSPITAL 21. and we 'eard the nurse say 'get that light out'  
22. and we didn't take no notice  
45. they asked me for an injection  
46. but I said I didn't wannit

He also uses both indirect *questions* (as, by implication, in 45 above) and *modals*, stressing the care with which he was treated after his operation was over:

- 82. then when I woke up this nurse asked me if me eye was straight or summat
- 85. ..asked me if I wanted owt to eat
- 89. I couldn't eat owt because I'd be sick ...

In ACCIDENTS, by contrast, Shelley used *negatives* to stress the disabling effects of her accidents which were still troubling her as she spoke:

- 70. I had to give up me band 'cause I couldn't hold me trumpet up properly
- 71. and then I can't do Games or P.E.

She used no *questions* at all but did use an '*or-clause*', a *comparative* and several *modals*, suggesting the anxiety and uncertainty surrounding her accidents :

- 14. I didn't know what to do - cry or laugh
- 34. and it felt as if me arm had gone down t'ole
- 35. could still feel it hanging down
- 36. I could feel it hanging down
- 37. and mum says they could just put it back in place

Both of these tellers focus on their representations of themselves, using similar evaluative strategies to different ends: Dean appealing for admiration from the audience for his resistance and liveliness, Shelley asking for respect for the suffering she had gone through. In both cases the tellers seemed to get what they wanted.

Karen (CASUALTY) used *negatives* several times in order to emphasise her position as a victim:

- 9. ....there was no one t' hang around with...
- 10. 'n I didn't talk ...
- 38. but I didn't have a lot
- 50. 'n I weren't allowed to move
- 52. .....me ribs weren't healing up at all

*Modals* are employed to the same end:

- 28. I could 'ardly hear

Chris & Michael (ESCAPE) use fewer comparators than Dean, Karen or Shelley but some of their external evaluations are *questions*, as shown earlier. They use seven *negatives* to express the uncertainty with which they deliberately surrounded the events of their narrative, attributing the experience to other boys:

- 4. so we don't know whether its true
- 10. we're not sure

An '*or-clause*' is also implied in 4. and another expressed in 16:

- 16. the other thing he reckons is that in places its so dark that it makes no difference whether you have your eyes open or closed.

33 combines intensification and comparator in the forms of *repetition* and *comparatives*:

- 33. yes as I say as it got smaller and smaller...



These five 'autobiographical' tellers used comparators in ways which appeared to enhance their standing in the class: Dean built up his reputation as an irrepressible 'lad', Karen enhanced her standing as an athlete, Shelley gained sympathy for her suffering and justified her present non-athletic life, Chris & Michael shared with the class an exciting, risky adventure which they could not admit to being personally involved in, though some members of the class knew that they had been.

All the other tellers used *negatives*, though less often than the tellers of the four 'autobiographical' stories and they used the other categories very lightly. This is a defining difference between the 'autobiographical' stories and the rest. Labov comments that the use of comparators enlarges the world of the story, bringing into focus conditions or events that could have happened but didn't, so making us think beyond what actually did happen. Stories that use fewer comparators are thus less rich in potential meanings than those which use many (Labov, 1972, op.cit.).

### Correlatives

Labov found the use of correlatives was rare in pre-adolescents. However, Shelley, Karen, Dean and Michael all used them in their 'autobiographical stories':

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Shelley (ACCIDENTS) | 16. and my mum kept calling me a big baby and saying ' stop moaning '  |
| Karen (CASUALTY)    | 21. ....me scream ringing in me ears.<br>22. 'n then me head banging against the floor<br>24. 'n this woman were waking me up with all these comics<br>25. 'n me mam were by the side of me bed crying<br>26. 'n everything were turning round |
| Dean (HOSPITAL)     | 31. started hitting him waking him up  |
| Michael (ESCAPE)    | 31. and one of them just standing there laughing panicking   |

Gary (GRIP) also used correlatives to describe a dog trained to please strangers in order to steal from them:

18. and he starts dancing round wagging his tail just making a fool of himself

### Explicatives

Different forms of explicative, which explain the 'point' of the narrative, are to be found in the 'autobiographical stories':

- the point of Chris & Michael's story (ESCAPE) is that the boy who set light to some plastic in an underground tunnel, causing risk to life, was stupid. So we see: 32. then he had to quickly get out because of the gas;
- the point of Dean's story (HOSPITAL) is that he successfully resisted being ordered around by adults and was, in the end, treated with respect by them. Therefore, we have: 17. Nurse hit us....'cause we

were mucking around, and later: 36. about two hours after I had me light breakfast I went to..;

- the point of Karen's story (CASUALTY) is that she was very seriously injured and therefore, by implication, her present prowess on the sports field is remarkable. Hence: 4. and they took me to be x-rayed again because I was x-rayed when I got in when I was knocked out;
- The point of Shelley's story (ACCIDENTS) is that she was very badly hurt by her accidents, which prevent her doing P.E.:

64. and I just had to lie on the settee 'cause I couldn't move 'cause it hurt every time I moved..

Both Karen and Shelley embed one explicative within another, emphasising the hurt they had suffered and insisting the audience acknowledge it.

### 3.4 Findings

All the tellers showed that they understood how to choose story material which would interest their audience, and how to construct a well-formed plot in Labov's terms. The findings on the use of evaluations can be displayed along a continuum of audience-awareness, running from neutral to positive, where the greater the

number of evaluations used, the more positive the narrator's audience awareness is deemed to be.

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Fig.9.3. Continuum of audience awareness in ten exemplars

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NEUTRAL.....FBP.....TRG.....ECHA..... POSITIVE  
KEY: F=FOOTBALL T=TWINS E=ESCAPE\* B=BEAR R=RETURN  
C=CASUALTY\* P=PILOT G=GRIP H=HOSPITAL\* A=ACCIDENTS

---

\* 'Autobiographical' stories

Fig. 9.3 shows that the 'autobiographical' stories were much more strongly evaluated than the others and therefore showed most audience-awareness. I now expand on this finding, using contextual knowledge.

### 3.5 Audience-awareness in the four 'autobiographical' exemplars

The 'autobiographical' stories are: ESCAPE, HOSPITAL, CASUALTY and ACCIDENTS ( stories 7, 23, 24, 26 ). I now briefly contextualise each and then discuss them as a group. ESCAPE, which, in several respects, is unlike all the other stories, I discuss last.

### 3.5.1 Hospital

HOSPITAL was told after Mrs. B. had spent time, during a preparation period, helping Dean; he had returned to school following a two-week absence and felt that he had nothing to tell. She had asked him to tell her privately about his recent stay in hospital for minor eye surgery and then suggested he jot down a few notes on the subject. When asked to perform, he was extremely reluctant, first refusing outright, then saying, 'Ask me questions'. Mrs B. did so and, with her support, he finally got going. Dean had a reputation as a trouble-maker, so the audience was very interested in what he might say and do. At first, they responded to him with scepticism, then, they laughed at his descriptions of himself clowning in the ward and, as he began to take the whole narration over, no longer needing Mrs. B's support, they genuinely enjoyed his performance, laughing with, rather than at, him. In the end, the telling was a success which he clearly took pleasure in. The telling ensured that Dean became a socially accepted member of the class again, after his absence.

### 3.5.2 Casualty

Immediately after Dean had finished, when Mrs. B. asked if anyone else had had a hospital experience, Karen took the story-teller's chair without being asked. CASUALTY can be seen as her response to Dean, an attempt to cap his success with something even more impressive. Karen's standing in the class at the time was good; she had athletic prowess and was popular amongst the girls. The audience were silently attentive throughout most of her performance in contrast to

their lively interaction with Dean. The account of how she was knocked down by a lorry and suffered serious injuries and multiple operations was clearly regarded as convincing. The only one to show some doubts was Graham who asked if she had 'been in the papers' after the accident and showed great surprise when she said no. In later lessons, whenever storytelling was mentioned, Dean asked Mrs. B. if Karen could tell her story again.

### 3.5.3 Accidents

ACCIDENTS, again volunteered, was told in another lesson, a few days after HOSPITAL and CASUALTY. The teller, Shelley and her group of friends were not close to nor popular with the dominant girls. ACCIDENTS was a reply to both Dean's and Karen's stories and a bid for understanding of ongoing health problems. It involved Keeley, telling how she had caused the first of Shelley's injuries by tripping her whilst they were playing at Judo. This revelation heightened the audience's interest in the telling and embarrassed Keeley. The telling was long, there were two separate accounts of falls and subsequent hospital treatments; then, Shelley launched into a third narrative about falling downstairs and not wanting to go to hospital again. (This fragment has not been included in the analyses). At this point, the attention of the audience began to waver. Mrs. B. asked Shelley if she still had any trouble from the injuries. She said she did and that this was why she was excused P.E. and Games lessons. Discussion followed in which James blamed Keeley for Shelley's troubles and Keeley

reacted indignantly. It is possible that the telling enhanced respect for Shelley, at least amongst some members of the class.

#### 3.5.4 Discussion

Each of the three tellers worked on improving their own standing in the class through the central persona of the narrative they told, in each case an alternative self. Dean's persona was a 'lad', an anti-hero, Karen's was a heroine and Shelley's was a victim, of circumstance and of other people's actions. Clearly, each of them was convinced of the reportability of what they had to tell. That this was so is no surprise, since we all spend a great deal of our lives telling ourselves stories, mostly in the head, about experiences we have had or imagine. We enjoy telling both kinds of story to other people to see what they think and we are *'especially and inevitably interested in the character that is ourselves'* (Smith, 1992: 64). Karen and Shelley, as voluntary tellers, can be described as intrinsically motivated to perform. Dean, at first apparently averse to performing at all was able to get started by answering the questions his teacher asked (at his own suggestion) and relished performing once the audience began to respond positively to him.

There is external evidence that Dean's and Shelley's stories were both drawn from personal experience; it is therefore fair to say it is probable that they were engaged in making sense of their remembered experience for themselves at a deep level, re-ordering it as they spoke.

Karen was doing something which was similar but also different, as I discovered some months later. Her tutor reported that, at parents' evening, Karen's mother had said that her daughter had never been in hospital in her life. This information, later independently confirmed by events after my classroom inquiry was over, changes the way in which 'Casualty' must be viewed. Instead of its being a story based on remembered personal experience it becomes an invented fantasy with Karen as main protagonist. Her motivation to perform can now be seen as clearly akin to that of a younger child involved in shared dramatic play, trying out an invented life history to see what it would have felt like and, at the same time, seeing what others would think of it and of her. The silent concentration of the audience during this performance becomes a tribute to Karen's skill as a teller rather than to her fortitude as a survivor; Graham's scepticism about her story must now be respected.

### 3.5.5 Escape

ESCAPE was not volunteered but was elicited at random by Mrs. B. Chris and Michael were, thus, obliged to perform. However, they were not reluctant but well motivated performers. As Fig. 9.2 (p.375b) shows, ESCAPE was strongly evaluated and, through a large number of external evaluations, showed positive audience-awareness. The tellers' motivation derived from the context of their social life with school friends which, by chance, I knew something about from a conversation I had had with Chris and Michael a week before their performance. I now give some



details about this context and then discuss ESCAPE as 'disguised autobiography'.

My journal entry for the previous week makes it clear that Chris and Michael were very excited about an 'underground adventure' they had had. They were eager to talk about it, but guarded at the same time, most insistent that the whole story was a secret. The following is a summary of the entry:

*I discussed fantasy with Michael and Chris who are both fans of Tolkien and of role-playing games of the 'Dungeons and Dragons' variety. They insisted that fantasy was far better than any 'true' story. I asked if they had ever had an experience which was exciting enough to warrant being told or written for other people. This question prompted them to tell me about exploring some large drainage tunnels which were being laid in a field near the school, where a new road was to be built. They were clearly very excited about what had happened but stressed that it was a secret. All of them, especially James, who, I gathered, had been involved but did not take part in the conversation, would get into trouble if their parents found out. They did not specify exactly why this was, but said something about a plastic sack they found underground.*

The physical landscape of ESCAPE tallied with this guarded description I had been given, the week before, of the real adventure: it was the normally hidden underground world, quite different from the familiar roads fields and houses above. The 'old friend's mates' in the story 'started going up it for dares/ to see who'd go farthest'. The psychological landscape of the story was full of excitement and fear; the words 'dead scared' framed the whole. On reflection, the vividness of the descriptions convinced me that the events of the story were the boys' own recollections, for example:

'...in places its so dark it makes no difference whether you have your eyes open or closed'

' you can put your hand right up to your face and not be able to see it'.

The 'old friend' and his 'mates', I saw, were inventions used as cover. The truth emerged openly when Michael, energetically miming the way flames were put out in the tunnel, slipped into using the first person pronoun: ' we quickly charged back, stamping it out..' No one in the audience, myself included, appeared to notice this slip at the time of the performance.

Listening to the tape several times convinced me that the boy in the story who set fire to some plastic in the tunnel must have been James, in the real life adventure, and that this was the information that had been censored in the earlier account I had been given. This would explain Michael's sarcastic emphasis when, in the performance, he said: 'one of them just *happened* to have some matches on him/ started burning it/probably smoke pouring all out of the road--from the manhole cover'. He was, I decided, pointing out to James that his stupidity with the matches was not only physically dangerous but could also have led to their discovery, the one thing James himself would have wanted to avoid

### 3.5.6 Discussion

Since Chris and Michael went to considerable lengths to ensure that their experience was disguised as someone else's, their reasons for

performing must have been somewhat different from Dean's and Shelley's. They were not trying to negotiate their social identity nor to enhance their standing with the class. Their performance is better understood, like Karen's, as an episode of play in which their real audience was not the class and teacher but each other and James. The three of them were the insiders who knew the real meaning of the story being told. The rest of those present were outsiders who thought they understood what was being related but really did not (Kermode, 1979).

Chris and Michael's intense interest in role-playing board games was not shared by others in the class, apart from James. Their actual adventure in the tunnel had probably been, for all three, something like one of these games, envisaged as tests of bravery, strength and cunning, usually set in underground tunnels or ruined castles: a form of makebelieve play, especially exciting because of the danger. Telling the story was a way of re-living the game in another dangerous context. In telling they were certainly at risk, since, if Mrs. B. had suspected the truth, she might have reported the incident to the head teacher, to the boys' parents or even to the police. The whole performance was full of tension with, I realised, a hint of cruelty in it, because James had not wanted anything to be said. The silence observed by James (and myself) probably spiced the risk that Chris and Michael took.

### 3.5.7 Findings

All the stories use evaluations and therefore their tellers showed audience awareness to different degrees, according to this measure, as they did in the material they had chosen and in the plots they constructed. The 'autobiographical' stories are distinct because, judged by the evaluations used, their tellers were, or became, more strongly motivated to tell than the others i.e. they were more convinced of their stories' reportability (Labov, 1972, op.cit.).

#### 4. The significance of the use of 'written language'

As I have shown paradigmatically in Chapter Eight, linguistic analyses of the stories produced in the classroom context revealed a mixture of 'oral language' ( language with features close to those of informal conversation) and 'written language'. The lexical density (LD) analyses of the exemplars produced a spread of results which, although narrow, differentiated between them, showing that some contained a higher proportion of 'written language' than others (see Fig. 9.4, p.375c). Using these findings, I ranked the exemplars according to their LD levels and ranged them along a linguistic continuum stretching from 'written language' to 'oral language' (see Fig. 9.5, below).

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Fig. 9.5 Continuum of 'written/oral language' in ten exemplars

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WRITTEN LANGUAGE .....GFTEB|ARHCP.....ORAL LANGUAGE

KEY: G = GRIP F = FOOTBALL T = TWINS E = ESCAPE\* B = BEAR  
A = ACCIDENTS\* R = RETURN H = HOSPITAL\* C = CASUALTY\* P = PILOT

---

I now review the story data in relation to their sources in two groups: those to the left of the central point of the continuum, which contained higher proportions of 'written language', and those to the right of it, which contained higher proportions of 'oral language'. I then discuss the findings of this review.

It is worth recalling at this point that, although the pupils had been allowed to choose whatever source they wished (see Fig. 9.4, p.375c) and to use writing in any way they chose during preparation, when they performed, they were obliged to rely solely on memory. Thus they all had to engage in simultaneous oral composition and performance.

#### 4.1 Stories closer to the 'written language' end of the continuum

Four of the stories in this group: GRIP, BEAR, TWINS and FOOTBALL are re-tellings of written texts; the fifth, ESCAPE was not based on a close written source. The transcripts of GRIP, BEAR, TWINS and FOOTBALL show that the tellers were afraid they would not be able to remember the source story and, because of this,

experienced difficulty in composition-in-performance. In reviewing these five performances, I pay attention to the linguistic strategies used by different tellers, using textual evidence and, where necessary, background information from my journal record.

4.1.1 GRIP ( Gary). Source: 'Grip the Thief' from *Five True Dog Stories*

Gary was very anxious about performing and wanted to hold on to his copy; when it was his turn, Mrs. B. took the copy from him, saying, 'Go on; you don't need that'. He did, in fact, know the story well and followed its pattern closely. As he gradually relaxed, he began to change the language of the text he had read into language designed to cultivate solidarity with his peers, i.e. the informal language of natural spontaneous conversation. Gary's skilfulness can be appreciated when the written text is compared with the transcript of the spoken version :

Written text: One raw and windy winter night he stopped a stage coach on a road outside town. The door of the coach burst open. Three men with guns jumped out. Tom didn't stand a chance. He was captured and thrown in jail.

Spoken version: 'so one cold winter night/ he stopped a coach and three men jumped out/ door burst open/ and three men jumped out with guns/ and got him/ and slung him in jail'

Here, Gary omits some of the elaboration of the written story (the underlined portions) but retains the action essential to the plot, substituting active expressions ('got him and slung him in jail') for passive ('he was captured and thrown in jail') and, with the use of intensification, repeating the sequence about three men jumping out of the coach, making the second version more dramatic than the first ('door burst open

....with guns'). His performance shows that he had developed a personal involvement with the story he had read and that he had the narrative competence which enabled him to begin to 'translate' it into language appropriate to his audience and to the occasion.

#### 4.1.2 FOOTBALL (Kate & Gaynor). Source: a family anecdote

During preparation, Kate had told me this story about her older brother, making it vivid, especially her mother's feelings of anxiety when the child disappeared and her relief when she found him. Like Gary, Kate was anxious about performing and, when Gaynor arrived without a story, Mrs. B. suggested that the two girls should collaborate. They seem to have written out the story, divided it between them and learnt alternate portions by heart, following a procedure used in preparing tutor group/primary school assemblies. The transcript thus records a recitation of a fixed written script; the absence of repairs and pauses confirms this view. The insertion of a written script into the process of preparation froze Kate's performance and kept the story at a distance from Gaynor.

#### 4.1.3 TWINS (Sarah & Shelley). Source: an Agatha Christie detective novel

Like Kate & Gaynor, Sarah, who opened this telling, spoke without stumbling or pausing, suggesting that she too had learnt her piece by heart. Knowing her as an inexperienced reader, I am sure she had not herself read the detective novel source. Shelley, who had, would have told her about it, perhaps writing the words down for her to learn.

Shelley herself, who went on with the narration after Sarah, found it very difficult, as I have already indicated, to convey the rest of this long complicated story. The performance was, like several others not included among the exemplars, an attempted transmission of data. It resembles the 'vicarious stories' noted by Labov, which were devoted to re-telling the story of a film and lacked 'point' because the tellers did not feel personally involved in the narrative (Labov, 1972, op.cit.).

#### 4.1.4 BEAR ( James) Source: a told story (see Chapter Eight)

James's oral source (probably the words of an authoritative adult speaker) contained information connected with the disciplines of history and sociology which he did not fully understand and traces of folktales which he may or may not have been aware of. His own telling moves from coping with 'written language' in an extended orientational statement, into informal oral language, more appropriate to his peers.

#### 4.1.5 ESCAPE (Chris & Michael) Source: joint personal experience

Chris and Michael controlled their narrative partly through the use of tense: past tense for the plot line and present tense for external evaluations

e.g. 'they went further and further/ and found more of these rooms/ they found all sorts of things up there

and: 'this is the bit I don't believe'



Both boys also used complex syntax for passages containing embedded evaluations, e.g.

'another thing what they reckon is/ that these tunnels start off fairly big/ so you can almost stand up/ and then they get really small/ so that you're crawling/ kind of thing'

The syntactical complexity of this telling is a sign of 'written language', yet there did not appear to be any written source. It seems that the complicated task Chris and Michael had set themselves: telling what happened to the fictional boys (disguised representations of themselves) and making evaluative comments, sometimes giving the views of the fictional boys, sometimes their own opinions as narrators, necessitated the use of complex language and the boys had the narrative competence to provide it.

I assume that the boys' easy narrative competence was, at least in part, a result of their extensive experience as readers. Both were seasoned readers of fantasies, including some of the works of Tolkien, science fiction and 'decision novels' patterned on Role-Playing Games. They can be said to have approached the task of spontaneous oral composition-in-performance as though they were writing an adventure of the sort they enjoyed reading and talking about. What distinguishes their telling from the others is, on the one hand, their total involvement in their story and, on the other, the relation of their prior reading to the telling. For them, as for Shelley, reading was, at the time, a part of life out of school as well as in; they felt involved in the stories they had read as much as they were involved in the adventure they recounted and disguised.

#### 4.2 The stories nearer to the oral language end of the written/ oral language continuum

All of these stories followed some sort of pre-existing orally transmitted pattern, either a commonly known script circulating through oral transmission and reinforced by T.V. broadcasts (HOSPITAL, ACCIDENTS, CASUALTY) or a story from local oral tradition (RETURN, PILOT). Karen's performance of CASUALTY is now seen as different from the other 'autobiographical' stories in that it was not based on a personal experience.

##### 4.2.1 HOSPITAL (Dean) ACCIDENTS (Shelley). Sources: personal experiences

These two stories, performed late in the series can be assumed to be of exclusively oral provenance. The events related clearly counted as momentous in Dean's recent life and in Shelley's over several years, so they must have been talked about a great deal out of school. During preparation, Dean's story was elicited piecemeal in conversation with Mrs. B. Shelley had no preparation time in class because she volunteered an additional performance at the end of a session. Both texts were composed in overt interaction with the audience. Excerpts from the raw transcripts illustrate the process in each case:

### Dean

Dean: ---I met a friend in there and that/ this kid (P)  
Mrs. B.: what was his name?  
Dean: Darren C.../ bit of an idiot  
Pupil: bit like you/ (*laughter*) you're a real idiot  
Mrs. B. sh!/ right/ go on Dean/ go on

### Shelley

Shelley: ...I rode this little shetland pony called 'Rubbish'  
Pupils: (*laughter*)  
.....  
Shelley: ---and then I can remember me arm being stretched / thinking 'oh  
its going to snap in a minute'  
Pupils: eugh! (*expression of disgust*)

Both stories are shaped as variations on the 'hospital script' inevitably used orally by family or friends and regularly purveyed by secondary oral sources such as news bulletins, documentaries and drama series on television. The common script at least was bound to be very familiar to the audience. Both pupils became comfortable in the performance situation and were able to use the informal language of everyday conversation they would have used with their peers out of class.

#### 4.2.2 RETURN (Sarah) Source: family story

Sarah's story takes a form which, like Kate's story of the lost child who was found after a search, is common in folklore: the disaster miraculously avoided. (Two other versions of this story, recorded by Sarah's grandfather and grandmother (see Appendix 2, pp.398, 399) differ from each other and from Sarah's version in several details, but agree in highlighting the focal event: the children's miraculous escape

from possible death or certain injury). Sarah's language is informal and conversational.

#### 4.2.3 CASUALTY (Karen) Source: T.V. hospital dramas

Like ACCIDENTS, this story was volunteered and not prepared during any lesson. In discussion following Karen's telling, it became clear that Annmarie had heard some of the story before. It seems likely, given the assured nature of Karen's performance that she had probably told the story several times before. Audience familiarity with T.V. hospital 'scripts' would account, at least in part, for the pin-dropping silence in which they listened to her.

#### 4.2.4 PILOT (Magnus) Source: an oral tale

Magnus had told another version of this story, during the previous school year, to a couple of friends (see Appendix 2, p.378). Like RETURN, this version is different in several respects from its predecessor but the motif of the ghost returning to the scene of his death is present in both. Like the motifs of the disaster narrowly avoided and the lost child eventually found, this one is common in folklore. The story is told throughout in extremely informal language such as Magnus would have used in everyday conversation with his peers.

#### 4.3 Discussion

Writing is always associated with power; the authority of the written mode in education, particularly in the form of text books and work sheets in school, gives written texts additional weight in the eyes of pupils. They commonly find it hard to change the actual words of a written text which they see as correct. It is therefore not surprising that those pupils who attempted re-tellings of texts they had read were somewhat intimidated by them (GRIP, TWINS). James, whose oral source had used 'written language' had similar difficulties, as I have shown. For others, whose sources were part of the oral tradition, the relationship to the source story was much less problematic; in oral transmission, text changes happen all the time because people have only memory to rely on. People tend to remember the parts of stories that have most interested them and over time they forget, invent or modify other details (Bartlett, 1932). The different versions of PILOT and RETURN are evidence of this.

There are signs, in the story data, of a correlation between high LD levels (high proportion of 'written language') and low audience-awareness. This correlation is apparent in FOOTBALL, TWINS and BEAR, showing that where the attention of tellers was taken up with producing a 'correct' text, true to the original, they did not stress their story's reportability, i.e. they did not seem convinced that it had point and, therefore, did not help the audience to feel that it did. Conversely, in three of the 'autobiographical' stories, HOSPITAL, CASUALTY and ACCIDENTS, low levels of LD (high proportion of

oral language) correlate with positive audience awareness, showing that, where tellers' attention was on the process of creating a story they were strongly committed to, they were free to focus on the point of the story, stressing its reportability. Since in every telling there are so many variables, these correlations do not always apply; as I have already shown, ESCAPE has a high LD level but also a high level of audience awareness.

#### 4.4 Findings

This section has revealed the importance of intertextuality. All the tellers used their prior experience of texts, whether derived from reading, from talk or from T.V. experience in telling their own stories. It has also shown the different ways in which the pupils drew upon entwined oral and literate traditions of story, using their communicative and narrative competence in the tellings they performed.

#### 5. Generic classification of the ten exemplars

In order to gain some sense of how the tellers were shaping their spoken stories in conformity with their experience of literary conventions, I analysed them according to Warlow's taxonomy, discussed above (p.207). I now briefly explain the allocation of each text to the category shown in the key to Fig. 9.6. (see p.375(d)).

### ESCAPE : Category B

In this story, the normal laws of nature are suspended in the third 'take' on the boys' escape, where it is suggested that some primeval force is menacing them in the tunnel. Roberto Calasso (1993) reminds us that Greek myths were stories passed on with variants and that '*we enter the mythical when we enter the realm of risk*' (Calasso, 1993: 278 ).

### PILOT : Category D

This is a modern derivative of a legend and the normal laws of nature are intruded upon by the ghostly hitch-hiker. It also fits the category of legend adopted by the folklorist, Katherine Briggs, since it was '*once believed to be true*' (Briggs 1970, op.cit.:1). Stories which accumulate around a kernel of historical truth are usually known in folklore studies as legends.

### BEAR : Category G

A modern derivative of a traditional folktale in a modern setting.

### FOOTBALL: Category G

The story begins with a conventional fairytale opening: 'once there was this little boy', which sets it in a timeless past. The plot resembles that of a curtailed fairytale: the hero is a young boy who sets out fearlessly into the wider world, his mother searches for him and finds him, unharmed, developing his prowess in a manly way. At the same time, the normal laws of nature are maintained; it is action-centred and takes place in a familiar setting.

### GRIP: Category H

An action-centred story, in a historical context in which feelings and thought are not made explicit.

### TWINS: Category J

The story is centred on the failed murder attempt of one twin by the other and , although one must assume the motive was jealousy, there is no expression of thought or feeling and no direct speech used. Thus, the story is action-centred.



### CASUALTY: Category K

This story is centred in feelings and the normal laws of nature are maintained; it takes place in a conventional setting for a TV hospital series.

### RETURN: Category L

In this story, the normal laws of nature are maintained; it is action-centred in a familiar setting.

### ACCIDENTS& HOSPITAL : Category M

Both these stories take place in a familiar setting in a realistic world and are centred in feelings.

#### 5.4.5 The Findings

Taking both textual and contextual evidence into account, the ten exemplars correspond to eight of Warlow's thirteen categories. It is likely that most pupils were able to handle more than one of these. As a duo, Sarah and Shelley created a realistic action-centred story in a conventional setting (TWINS); as soloists, Sarah told a realistic action-centred story in a familiar setting (RETURN) while Shelley

told realistic but feelings-centred stories, also in familiar settings (ACCIDENTS). The tellers show that they understand that different sorts of story worlds have '*different levels of veracity*' (Warlow, 1977, op.cit.). In PILOT, a ghost can thumb a lift and long destroyed spitfires can fly again but such supernatural events do not happen in the world of ACCIDENTS. The fact that Warlow's taxonomy, which was devised for published literature created by adults, can be applied to pupils' stories is a sign that the story data are forms of literature, however slight.

In CASUALTY and ESCAPE, Karen and Chris & Michael subvert the audience's expectations about their story worlds. Karen's story appears to take place in a world which represents the world we know (M), but in fact takes place in a conventional world (L). In ESCAPE, the narrators deliberately upset listeners' assumptions by hinting at the intrusion of the supernatural into the naturalistically described underground drainage tunnels

'and he...kept slipping as though something were pushing 'im/ he reckons there's something up there..'

Thus the story is placed in category B rather than M. This kind of manipulation of convention is evidence of sophisticated literary competences, a topic which is explored more fully in Chapter Ten.

## 6. Findings and discussion

Examination of the three significances in the exemplars enriched my appreciation of the pupils' narrative competences. I found that, to differing extents, they all

- made efforts to create storyworlds which were credible and explicit to their audience;
- showed understanding of the dialogical nature of narrative;
- used 'written language' and generic narrative conventions and scripts , indicating their inter-textual connections;

The four 'autobiographical' stories were clearly distinct with regard to credibility and reportability: in HOSPITAL CASUALTY and ACCIDENTS, orientations are used more heavily than in any other story; in ESCAPE, they are used more than in the rest, except for GRIP and TWINS. In all four, evaluations are used much more heavily than in all the other stories, thus showing their tellers' strong feelings about what they had to say and their awareness of the dialogical nature of narrative.

Karen's CASUALTY commanded the most attentive listening from the audience; one probable reason for this was the verbal artistry of her composition. In her opening, (see p.255) she compresses a series of narratives inside one another, like a set of Chinese boxes, to explain her protagonist's accident. This condensed history is calculated to call up in the peer audience feelings of solidarity and opposition to teachers who

unjustly expel one's friends or keep one behind after school. The sequence ends with her appeal for empathy: 'I were ever so lonely', followed by the description of the accident on the road. Here, she uses monosyllabic, active verbs for the lorry that knocked her down, conjuring up the metaphor of a predatory beast : 'come', 'crushed', 'snapped', 'broke'. Then, with an abrupt switch of perspective, she takes the audience with her, as she passes into unconsciousness: 'n all I can remember was me scream ringing in me ears/ 'n me head banging on the floor..' The participial phrases suggest continuing pain and suffering, completing the depiction of the adult world against her, as a child.

Karen seemed to compel the audience to pay attention by driving the narrative on paratactically with just the occasional pause or repair. She used regional dialect verb forms more consistently than anyone else in the class so that her telling suggested intimacy, the sharing of confidences, reinforcing the effect of the use of first person narration. Although the story was not true to her actual experience, it *felt* true.

There are many more signs of developed literary competences in Karen's telling which were not exposed by the Labovian analyses. Although Labov's system recognises, in the evaluation category, the importance of affect, it does not reveal the metaphoric, the literary aspect of narratives. It is this dimension which I now turn to in Chapter Ten, where I apply narratological theory to the private story data.

## **CHAPTER TEN:**

### The Oral Story as Literature

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I expand my exploration of the literary competences inherent in the oral narratives of 12/13 year olds by focusing on the work of a single pupil. Emma was an inexperienced reader who produced more spoken stories over the period of the study than the other members of her English class; too nervous to perform in class in front of a peer audience, she enjoyed telling stories privately. The chapter is in three chronologically ordered sections, each featuring a different group of stories and each focusing on a different aspect of oral storytelling as a literary activity:

1. The oral story as verbal symbolic play;
2. A developmental perspective on literary competences;
3. Literary competences in relation to recently experienced written narrative texts.

Emma's stories were told in three differently private contexts, in each of which her concept of audience was likely to have been different and to have affected her telling in a distinct way.

# 1.     The oral story as verbal symbolic play

The 'autobiographical' stories, discussed in Chapter Nine show that the meaning of a story does not depend solely on the teller's knowledge of language, experience of the world and familiarity with other stories and story conventions but that feelings are also a vital constituent. This fact is recognised in Labov's evaluation category of narrative structure where the affective is central (Labov, 1972, op.cit.). Vygotsky saw affectivity as central to the themes of children's play and implicated in the fictitious 'I' of the narrator (Vygotsky, 1978, op.cit. ). Piaget saw that, in play, feeling is inseparable from intellectual activity and mastery (Piaget, 1951, op.cit.). Fox has shown that young children's invented stories, constructed through their mastery of language, are episodes of imaginative verbal play and that, because of the facility of language to represent things metaphorically, such stories also have a metaphoric relationship to the lives of their tellers (Fox, 1993, op.cit.).

This section features a group of three 'E.T. Stories': 'E.T.Returns(1)', 'E.T.News' and 'E.T.Returns (2)'. I discuss these stories as extended episodes of play, in which Emma explores themes that I believe were important to her at a time of stress following her transfer from primary to secondary school; these stories also show her engaged in drafting and redrafting her compositions and trying out different narrative discourse forms.

### 1.1 'E.T. Returns (1)'

The recording of 'E.T. Returns (1)' has all the characteristics of symbolic play: it relates events in an imaginary world governed by conventions chosen by Emma who monologues to herself, rapidly moving the action along and enacting the speeches of all her characters. The recording sounds as if she is enjoying what she is doing; it is clear that she is seriously committed to it. Although an interruption by Steven, who opens the door to speak to her, derails her briefly, it does not prevent her from resuming and finishing her story. The whole can be interpreted as having a metaphorical connection with her life. In the following discussion of this first story, I outline its context of composition and what I know of its intertextual context ( details which are also relevant to 'E.T.News' and to 'E.T. Returns (2)') and summarise the action, which is in six episodes. Next, I indicate the three conventions which govern the structure of the episodes and show how Emma used the story to explore her feelings and to think rationally about two interconnected topics: fears and adult/parent-child relations. Finally, I discuss the metaphoric force of the story.

#### 1.1.1 The context of composition

After one of Emma's protracted absences during her first term in secondary school, when I was her English teacher, I suggested, that she should take a tape and tape-recorder into the Book Room (a small store off an open area just outside the English classroom, often used for small group work). She said she wanted to tell a story about E.T., the small alien in the currently

popular film of the same name, so I suggested she try making up a sequel about E.T. coming back to earth.

### 1.1.2 The intertextual context

At least two identifiable narratives were important to Emma in creating this piece: one was an oral story which has been categorised as a modern legend and is sometimes called 'Maniac on the Roof' (Healey & Glanvill, 1992, op.cit.); this story had been told by a member of the class during a discussion about ghost stories. The second narrative was the film *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* (Spielberg, 1982) which Emma had seen on video at home. The film relates the story of Eliot, aged 10, who is feeling a sense of loss because his parents' marriage has recently broken up and loneliness because his older brother and friends have no time for him. Eliot finds E.T., accidentally left on earth by a departing alien space craft, takes him in and hides him from his mother in a closet, sharing the secret at first only with his sister. Eliot and E.T. develop a relationship which is physically and emotionally symbiotic and Eliot teaches E.T. to communicate in English. They share adventures in which E.T. uses his magic powers. An important theme in the film is the conflict between the determination on the one hand, of unnamed authorities, including scientists with heavy equipment, to capture and study E.T. and, on the other hand, of Eliot to protect him. 'E.T. Returns (1)' shows, I believe, that when Emma (who had four older brothers) had watched the film, she had felt a strong affinity with Eliot, with E.T. and with Eliot's sister.

Although Emma's own story is full of intertextual references to both the oral tale and the film, it does not simply retail either. Using her



imagination, she blends elements from both with strands of her life experience to form a new verbal artefact. Her story takes place in familiar places: home, roads, fields, cemetery, corner shop, office and in imagined locations drawn from film and story: the big mountain, the magical beach, the forest.

### 1.1.3 'E.T. Returns(1)': Summary of the action

The transcript can be divided into eight episodes, the start of each being denoted by a temporal or spatial marker such as: 'it was autumn now' or 'the children went home'

Episode one. As darkness falls, Eliot and his sister are with their mother driving along a road near their home when they see a 'big white thing' which could have been a ghost. Then, there is a glow in some bushes and, in the corner of a field, 'a big round thing' which they cannot identify. An alien jumps on to the roof of the car and the children's mother is terrified; she runs to fetch help: friends with guns who capture several aliens. The children recognise E.T., take him home and hide him in the closet.

Episode two. The children go out with their father in his lorry, at harvest time. On the way home, they see a 'white thing' standing in the road and they run over it; they look for it but cannot find it. Later, they take a short cut through the cemetery to go and tell their friends about the ghost. In the cemetery, they are chased by a big spider, which attacks E.T., piercing his skin. A man calls the spider off and shows an interest in E.T., who is hostile and spits at him; the man chases E.T. with a walking stick. As they run away, the children and E.T. fall into a grave which opens and they are stuck there for a long time. Eventually, they get out and go to a beach where they swim, play games and find diamonds; they stay there 'for a few days'. When they return home and their mother asks where they have been, they say that they have just been to tell a friend about the ghost.

Episode Three. At night, a sheet rises off the bed and attacks E.T. The children discover it is their father, 'mucking about'. He yells at E.T. and takes him out; the children's mother wants E.T. removed.

Episode Four. E.T. leaves on a space ship. (*N.B. at this point, Steven opened the door and started chanting 'E.T., phone home' in an 'extra-terrestrial' voice, then left. The intrusion has not been included in the transcript of this story*).

Episode Five. The story starts up again with the children out riding their bicycles with E.T. who, using his magic finger, launches them into the air. A man sees them and starts chasing them. E.T. 's magic finger enables the bikes to fly through the air. They land in a forest.

Episode Six. The man who saw them reports to his boss in the office, goes out again and shoots at E.T. but misses and, instead, hits a bird.

Episode Seven. E.T. hides in a shop where he helps himself to food; he is discovered by the owner and his wife who chase him out; a great wind starts to blow.

Episode Eight. When the wind dies down, E.T. says goodbye to Eliot and leaves in a space ship.

#### 1.1.4 Conventions used in 'E.T. Returns (1)'

The conventions governing this composition control the patterning of episodes and the kind of events allowed to happen. Thus, each episode is patterned in oppositions of a danger perceived and a danger removed, in some cases repeated several times. In Episode one, for example, the first perceived danger is a ghost, but a search shows there is no tangible evidence of one; the second danger is the arrival of apparently threatening aliens who are then captured by friends with guns; the third danger, a result of the second solution, is that E.T. could be shot or captured; this eventuality is avoided by the children's taking him home and hiding him.

The pattern of paired oppositions is interrupted twice in accordance with another of Emma's conventions, namely: the children experience undiluted happiness only when they are alone with E.T.:

Episode two: 'eventually did get out the grave/lots of spears and caves/they had a good time and come out to this place like a beach/ it had lots of diamonds/they went swimming there and played games and got some diamonds/ they stayed there for a few days..'

Episode five: 'he rose his finger and flew through the air over the trees/ eventually landed in the forest'

The first of these magical escapes is an 'out-of-time' experience and the second an effect of E.T.'s magic finger. In both cases, no adults are involved.

A third convention used is that, whereas E.T. is a loveable friend to the children, he must be kept hidden from adults who will always see him as a pest to be killed or captured. This third convention reveals that the conflicting values of children and adults cause them to deceive one another: two adult characters (the man in the cemetery( Episode 2) and the father (Episode 3)) behave hypocritically, using words which sound friendly towards E.T. in order to get their hands on him so that they can harm him or turn him out; the children, for their part lie to their mother to keep E.T.'s existence secret (Episode 2).

#### 1.1.5 The themes of 'E.T.Returns (1)'

The story can be seen as Emma's way of thinking about two intertwined issues: fears and adult/parent-child relationships. The first three episodes begin with the appearance of a 'white thing' which, on investigation, disappears (Episodes 1 and 2) the motif recurs as the father covered in a

sheet, 'mucking about', i.e. pretending to be a ghost (Episode 3). The significance of this series of events seems to be that ghosts are a form of the supernatural which does not exist and therefore need not be feared. More to be feared, it seems, are adults who hate the magic little alien the children love: screaming frightened mothers and men with guns (Episodes 1 and 6), piercing spiders or sticks (Episode 2). The father pretending to be a ghost has equivocal significance: just joking but still apparently responsible for turning E.T. out of the house (Episode 3). A passage at the end of Episode 2 shows the children deceiving their mother, as their father was just about to deceive them:

'then they went back to their mum/ 'where've you been?'/ 'oh nowhere/ went to tell the friends about the ghost/' 'stop mucking around'/ they looked very hideous like they *had* seen a ghost/ they didn't mind ghosts very much'.

A countering view of the parent-child relationship emerges at the end of Episode 3. Here, Emma makes a reasoned justification of E.T's departure, which is both a recognition of the bond between parents and children and an acknowledgement that it is sad to see E.T. leave:

it was sad times now/ E.T. had leave/ E.T. was very happy on earth/ he had to go though because his parents would miss him/ and he would miss them/ he had enjoyed it very much on earth

#### 1.1.6 Metaphor in 'E.T. Returns (1)'

As forms of play, Emma's stories, like Chris & Michael's 'Escape' and Karen's 'Casualty' have much in common with those of much younger children (Fox , 1993, op.cit.; Crago & Crago, 1982) but these young people were six to eight years older and their life concerns were naturally very

different from those of the 4-6 year olds. As an eleven year old at the time, Emma was perhaps anxious about puberty and certainly experiencing difficulty making the transition to a new school where she found the work daunting; she was in need of a close friend. Her story shows that she felt a strong sense of empathy both for E.T. and for ten year old Eliot. She seems to have understood that the film was telling her something important about her own life at a deep level, perhaps that it was, in some respects, a metaphor of her own life as she would have liked it to be. Watching the film had been, I believe, an experience of 'deep play' for her. Similarly, composing her own story was another experience of 'deep play', this time as producer rather than receiver of metaphorical meaning (Geertz, 1973, op.cit.).

In her sequel to the film, Emma can imagine herself as E.T., or as Eliot or as his little sister; in fact, she seems to envisage them as one composite character (usually referred to as 'they' and, once, as 'we') since they are always together, except when E.T. boards the space ship to leave, and are never separately characterised. E.T. - or the E.T. aspect of the composite character - provides Emma with both the feeling that she is not alone and the chance of magical escape from a world dominated by adults bent on violence. E.T. sees through the honeyed words of the man in the graveyard and openly resists him. In Episode 3, after the children's mother has screamed at her husband to '..get that thing out', E.T. achieves what Emma probably hoped for, for herself: 'E.T. did get praised and eventually did make friends'. Most important, he provides a magical means of escape and having fun.

The second version of E.T.'s departure is centred more simply in regret. The following extract (Episode 8) is immediately preceded by the bicycling flight through the air and the sympathetic storm, as in the film. The pathos of this passage, which shows Eliot's growing realisation that this is the last time he will see the small alien, becomes clearer when it is printed in lines, suggesting the affinity of ordinary speech with poetry (Hymes, 1996, op.cit.;Gee 1996, op. cit.):

it was next day now  
the wind was gone  
and all was quiet  
days went by and by again  
soon it was time for E.T. to go  
it's a sad time again  
'goodbye E.T.  
'I might never see you again'  
'I will come again one day'  
'I never ever see you again  
I'm sure I never see you again'  
he kissed and said 'be good'  
and all at once up in the little doorway of the space ship  
the dog ran up after him barking its head off  
and all at once it took off  
the end

#### 1.1.7 Discussion

The way she handles her two themes shows Emma engaged in a kind of debate, discussing with herself what she has been learning through life experience and from film and story: that the world is not always what it seems. Adults/parents have different values from children and both are capable of dissimulation, yet there is a strong bond between them; her words are chosen and shaped by both thoughts and feelings, 'the unified sensibility of the imagination' (Meek, 1985, op.cit.: 44). This composition

is evidence of self motivated learning, since Emma was not constrained nor prepared by her teacher, except in the lightest of ways.

### 1.2 'E.T.News'

The second recording in this group differs from the first in that, although it continues the story of E.T. after he has left Earth for the second time, it is a collage consisting of:

- part of an invented T.V. news broadcast about a dangerous man on the streets;
- a snatch of conversation between two child viewers (presumably Eliot and his sister) who realise the 'man' on the screen is E.T.;
- an invented item from a radio news broadcast, also about a dangerous man on the streets;
- discussion between the listening children about this;
- a piece of straight narrative relating E.T.'s life-saving adventure on another planet;
- the resumption of ITV 'real' news after the commercial break: 'welcome back to the news/the men who have been getting fuel covers on have been back on the ship/the battle between Argentina and the nuclear bombs/ the nuclear bombs have been protest about'.

The pattern here is drawn from a scene in the film where Eliot and his sister gather news about E.T. when he has disappeared; as in 'E.T.Returns (1)', Emma naturalises the scene within her own cultural context. The whole recording, punctuated by news signature tunes and sound effects, consists of an extended trying out of different discourses within a narrative, achieving unusual structural complexity.

### 1.3 'E.T. Returns (2)'

This version of the story of E.T.'s return to Earth shares the play characteristics noted in the first; it shows a similar, though more repetitive and less complex, patterning of paired oppositions: danger followed by the removal of danger.

#### 1.3.1 Summary

Episode 1. E.T. arrives by space-ship

Episode 2. Eliot and his sister go out on a picnic with E.T. They ride their bikes and, when they see some threatening-looking men with an army lorry, they escape on a space ship.

Episode 3. More threatening looking men with guns are already on board the space ship so, to escape from them, the children and E.T. land on another planet, which is made of sand. There, they see more menacing men so they decide to leave.

Episode 4. They return to Earth where E.T.'s parents are waiting for them. The children and E.T. leave the space ship. The men stop chasing them and E.T. and his parents leave for their own planet.

#### 1.3.2 Drafting, re-drafting and characterising

At the beginning of this version, where she is going over old ground, Emma moves from unrehearsed spontaneous composition into drafting and redrafting her text and envisioning her characters anew. Episode 1 (a) conveys the power and delight of imaginative creation: Eliot *thinks* E.T. into



coming back to Earth and has to look twice to convince himself that what he thinks he sees is really there. No other character is involved.

it was years by now since E.T. had last come/ till one day Eliot was thinking/ and all of a sudden seen a light/ in the sky/ and when it was time for bed/ the light grew bigger and bigger/ eventually there was a big red light on the ground/ he jumped out of bed/ and he saw the most strangest wonderful thing you've ever seen/ he looked again/ it wasn't/ it was E.T./ he was back/ quickly he rushed and got his night (P) coat on/ and ran out side/ 'E.T. you're back'

Episode 1(b), like 'E.T.News', is mainly concerned with what has happened to E.T. since the last time he left Earth. Now Eliot's sister is referred to as she, an individual who acts separately from him. Spoken words are not directly attributed to her but her thoughts are summarised (it was, it's E.T. he was back). E.T. himself is separately characterised and the various ways in which he now feels better are listed. His loneliness, encapsulated in a phrase from the publicity for the film (stranded three thousand million miles from home) is now bearable because, rationally, he understands that he will return home after a set time. For the first time, direct speech of both Eliot and E.T. is explicitly tagged ('said Eliot' 'said E.T.'). In 'E.T>Returns (1)' it was only the speech of peripheral characters, the mother and the shop keeper, that Emma treated in this way except that, when E.T. was leaving on the space ship, it was used once for him. Thus, we see that Emma is now developing fictional characters as identifiable individualised representations, rather than composite creations. (See p.191 for full text of Episode 1 (b)).

Episode 1 (c) begins, like (a) and (b), with the space ship landing. Then, there is a pause before Emma moves abruptly into conversation between E.T. and Eliot: 'I know where you can sleep' said Eliot/ 'in my sister's bed/ 'yes thankyou'. The sister now gains a voice to protest, at least momentarily, about her brother's assumption : 'oh no/ and where'm I going to sleep?. Later, in Episode

2, when the tyre of the sister's bike bursts, her brother tells her she'll have to walk but E.T. 'kindly jumped out of the basket/ put sister there/ and then sister clutched hold of E.T./ then they took off'. Thus, we see a progressively strengthening characterisation of the sister. At the end of the story, when the spaceship returns the children and E.T. to Earth, Emma says, 'E.T.'s parents were there on the earth to say goodbye/ and let the two sisters off ' Thus, it seems that, now, the female sibling has doubled, blotting out the male completely!

### 1.3.3 Discussion

Piaget maintains that engaging in symbolic play enables children to develop a sense of mastery (Piaget, 1951, op. cit. See Chapter Four). It is possible that Emma, having composed 'E.T.Returns (1)' and, through it, externalised some of her fears in narrative form, became able, in 'E. T. Returns (2)', to distance herself from the characters, seeing them now as separate projections. The gradual emergence and development of the specifically female character of the sister I take as a sign of developing confidence. Emma discovered that, in the fluid medium of oral narrative, she could make her characters do or be whatever she wanted, including changing their gender. The second version of the story is noticeably less inventive in terms of plot events than the first. The simple pattern of menace followed by escape is repeated several times with little variation, possibly because Emma has moved the action from Earth to a series of imaginary planets not found in her sources. She seems to be running out of ideas and, at the same time, amused by her own predicament, playing with words: (Episode 3) 'the ship was very very (P) rocking around/ they (*laughs*) got on to the planet (P) the planet was sand sand nothing but sand/ it was very tricky/ the sand was up to your neck/ 'n there was a big sand storm (P) they quickly trotskied off to the

other side/. The final comment by E.T. seems to refer as much to the narration as to the story events: 'o no don't know what we're gonna do'said E.T./ nothing at all in fact/ 'we'll have to get back somehow'/ and Emma firmly and abruptly draws the adventure to a close: 'and E.T. took off/ this is the end of the story'.

The E.T. stories provide evidence of Emma's literary competences. As she creates her recorded monologues, she becomes both the teller and the recipient of the story she tells:

'he found a hiding place, the best hiding place you've ever had'  
'he saw the most strangest wonderful thing you've ever seen'  
'you can remember them from the last voyage'

She harnesses the metaphoric power of language to give expression to her own feelings; at the same time, she stays consistently within the particular discourse conventions she has chosen to observe. Thus, she enacts the paradox of play in which she exceeds her normal capabilities evident in English lessons (Vygotsky 1978 see p.136).

## 2. A developmental perspective on literary competences

This section features 'Virus Hit School', whose contexts of intertextuality and composition are described in the Introduction, and 'Ribs' Runners', a written story composed within the same curricular context by Michael who, unlike Emma, was an experienced reader. My intention was to discover what differences in literary competences, if any, were apparent in the two narratives, given the different levels of reading experience of their narrators, bearing in mind that both pupils were experienced viewers of

feature films on T.V. and video. An analysis of 'Virus Hit School', using Labov's categories had shown that Emma made it credible and reportable using orientations and evaluations (Labov, 1972, op.cit.). However, as in the case of Karen's 'Casualty' discussed in the last chapter, this analysis did not uncover the detail of Emma's literary competences. Therefore, I analysed 'Virus Hit School' afresh, using narratological categories. Structuralist literary theory, derived from studies of written literature, makes literary interaction continuous with oral interaction (Culler, 1975, op cit.) and so, having made a transcript of her recording, I was able to analyse Emma's oral story in exactly the same way as Michael's written one, using categories derived from this discipline. Accordingly, I carried out two analyses of both 'Virus Hit School' and 'Ribs' Runners', one based on Genette's system, which uncovers detailed literary competences, the other on Barthes' way of exposing the semiotic network of codes which listeners/readers activate as they move through a work of fiction (Genette, 1980, op.cit.; Barthes, 1972, op.cit.).

In what follows, the analyses of 'Virus Hit School' are exemplified and summarised; they are then compared with the results of the analyses of 'Ribs' Runners'. The findings of the comparison are subsequently placed alongside those of parallel analyses of the oral stories of two five year olds (Fox, 1993, op.cit.). These procedures enable me to sketch a developmental perspective on literary competences, into which Emma can be fitted.

## 2.1. Virus Hit School': Summary

(The story consists of 1,327 words which I have divided into nine episodes on the basis of spatial or temporal changes signalled in the text. The action is set in a representation of the actual school where the story was composed.)

Episode 1. A class goes into the Drama Studio with their teacher to perform a play about chemicals. One boy, Dean, in the role of Professor sniffs a dangerous chemical, faints and then revives.

Episode 2. During a Maths lesson, Dean feels unwell and is taken to the sick room. There, once he is left alone, he changes into a vampire and attacks a school typist, biting her on the neck.

Episode 3. The typist, at home that night, talks to her husband about the attack, describing it as a dream.

Episode 4. Next day, the typist is transformed into a vampire; she and Dean then attack the Deputy Head, Mr. G. and bite his neck; there is a fight with swords.

Episode 5. Mr. G. is taken ill during school dinner and is taken to the medical room; when he is alone, he changes into a vampire.

Episode 6. Mr. G. attacks the Head of Science, Mr. P. who is then also transformed. Now there are four monsters loose in the school.

Episode 7. A teacher starts to secure doors and windows and tells the pupils that they must stay in school overnight.

Episode 8. Helicopters bring in supplies which are delivered through roof lights. Pupils write home, requesting personal belongings. They transform the school into a home-like place with separate accommodation for boys and girls.

Episode 9. The monsters begin to destroy the building. A lab. assistant has found a chemical to cure the monster disease; she pours it over the

monsters and they all change back into human form. Everyone then goes home.

### 2.1.1 Analysis of 'Virus Hit School' according to Genette's narrative categories

Genette was concerned with the ways in which the writer's narrative distorts the story (the hypothetical sequence of events as they might have happened in real time and space), with regard to time relations, point of view and narration, which he thought were fundamental to narrative organisation and which he termed TENSE, MOOD and VOICE, respectively. The subdivisions of TENSE: order, duration, frequency and the ways in which they operate within a narrative, MOOD and the use of focalization to convey perspective on the narrative events, VOICE and the role of narrator functions are all explained and exemplified in Chapter Seven.

### 2.1.2 TENSE

Order: 'Virus Hit School' is told throughout in chronological order, with linked flashes back and forwards, in Episodes 3 and 7, e.g.

108. 'will we ever get home tonight?

109. we haven't done no work all day' (Episode 3).

A freestanding flashback is found in Episode 9:

156. by this time one of the people Mrs.C... had found the disease to stop the monsters

These examples are not true analepses and prolepses, as described by Genette, since they refer to points earlier or later within the time covered by

the present narrative, not to time before or after it. There is a true analepsis, however in 'E.T. Returns(2), Episode 1 (b) (see p.191).

Duration: In 'Virus Hit School' there are no ellipses but a series of scenes punctuated by summaries and pauses, typically at the end of episodes. For example:

### Episode Three

48. that night she's sitting in her house ( pause)
49. she said 'I fell asleep while I was typing today  
at school
50. I had a dream about this thing come  
and bit me on the neck'
51. the man started laughing saying 'never mind about your dreams
52. come on
53. you must go to bed
54. you've got a hard day ahead of you tomorrow at school' (scene)
55. so she went bed
56. and got up (summary)

Here the speed of narration moves from slow, to mimicking the speed of events in real time, to fast.

Frequency: The beginning of the story, with its implication that the same routines were followed every week, is iterative, an impression reinforced by the use of the continuous past: 'was reading' ( 5), indicating habitual action.

1. it was Monday morning
2. and all the kids went into school
3. and hung up their coats
4. they went straight into classrooms
5. everyone was reading their book
6. so I got out mine
7. and started to read too

In most of the story, the narration is singulative. The four transformations of humans into monsters are described in very similar ways, as we can see, for example, in the first two instances:

34. laying in bed

-----  
37. all at once he lost his hair

38. turned green

39. and horrible yellow teeth hanged down at each side of his mouth

40. and his nails slashed the covers as he got out (Episode 2.).

-----  
60. she lay in bed

61. and all at once she had loss of hair

62. turned green

63. and yellow teeth come - 'peared at each side of her mouth

63. she ripped her nails through the covers as she got out (Episode 3.).

Each transformation is described separately rather than being summarised in a single, iterative statement. Formulaic repetition is an essential memory aid in the oral tradition, (see Chapter Two).

### 2.1.3 MOOD

Perspective: most of the narration of 'Virus Hit School' is unfocalized, told by a hidden narrator from whom all events in the narrative can be said to be equidistant as in: 'at school next day she was sick/ and got told to go into the sickroom/ and go in bed too by the school nurse'. Focalization of events from the point of view of characters in the narrative enables listeners/readers to feel the impact of those events as if they were the characters. Passages of fixed focalization convey a single character's point of view, either through dialogue or through non-dialogue passages, both of which are present in the following excerpt:

13. first of all they had Dean J--- coming on stage as a professor



14. 'this is a very dangerous chemical
15. this can kill
16. let me take the top off
17. and you can see why'
18. he took the top off
19. and all this dangerous fumes and smoke come out
20. and then he took a deep breath
21. and dropped it
22. then he just fainted

Variable focalization, moving between different characters involves the listener/reader in appreciating their different perspectives on the same events. Episode 7 (104-116) provides an example:

104. Mrs. M--- started running around bolting all the doors
105. and all the kids were wondering what's going on
106. all the windows were bolted from the outside
107. all the kids 'gan to worry
108. 'will we ever get home tonight?'
109. 'we haven't done no work all day'
110. 'is it the end o' term?'
111. Mrs. M--- started to look in all the faces
112. 'what's up, Mrs. M---
113. what've we done wrong?'
114. 'you can't go home tonight kids
115. you'll have to stay in school
116. we'll have to get you some clothes in and bedding'

### Commentary

Here, focalization shifts between the perspectives of the teacher, Mrs M. , and 'the kids' as a group or, possibly, as individuals, and is conveyed both through reported speech/inner speech (108-110) and through non-dialogue (104, 106). Most of the episode draws the listener/reader to see and feel the events as the pupils saw them; their thoughts and feelings (105, 107) are described and their worries, which may have been voiced or simply thought, are quoted. Their questions, addressed to the teacher and therefore

presumably spoken (112, 113), are listed. Mrs. M is seen from the pupils' point of view, behaving like an anxious gaoler (104), then a silent interrogator of faces (111). The suggestion that she was as much a prisoner as the pupils, is insinuated in 106, with the use of the passive verb 'were bolted', especially since the windows were bolted 'from the outside'. When Mrs. M. does speak, it is not to answer any of the pupils' questions or to reassure them but to tell them that they cannot leave. Her failure to meet their needs effectively may make her seem to some listener/readers insensitive or pre-occupied or as if she is obeying someone else's instructions. The pupils' reported thoughts/speech and their assumption that they must be at fault, though they do not know how, marks them as having a sense of responsibility but as being powerless within the school hierarchy.

### Distance

Genette distinguishes three ways in which direct speech can be represented, enabling the narrator to vary focal length, i.e. the reader's/listener's distance from the narrative events:

- reported speech where direct speech is represented dramatically, or mimetically i.e. supposedly as uttered in the story;
- transposed speech where the gist of a character's supposed words is represented;
- narratised speech where no attempt is made to represent the supposed words.

Of these, dramatic 'mimetic' reported speech is the nearest to the reader/listener, transposed speech is more distant and narratised speech the most distant. Narratised thought, which indicates the narrator's awareness of cognitive processes and therefore the motivation of characters must have the shortest focal length of all, admitting the listener/ reader into the minds of characters (Fox, 1993,op.cit.).

In 'Virus Hit School', direct speech is represented in the form of mimetic reported speech, as in 108-111 and 113-116, above, bringing the speakers' concerns very close to the listener/reader. In Episode 3, Emma uses the convention of tagged reported speech embedded in surrounding narrative: she said 'I fell asleep...' (49); the man started laughing saying ' never mind...' (51) which extends focal length slightly, since it interposes the narrating voice between the fictional speaker and the listener/reader. In these examples, the tags are placed in front of the spoken words, a device common in oral narrative to make it clear who is speaking. Positioning of tags after direct speech , a convention used in written texts, is not used here. There are no examples of transposed or narratised speech in 'Virus Hit School', either. Examples of narratised thought were difficult to find, though two mental state verbs are used, showing Emma's awareness that characters can have a psychological dimension:

95. he just sat in the office all day without no one knowing he was there  
105. all the kids were wondering

#### 2.1.4 VOICE

The narrative is mostly told by means of third person subsequent narrating, except for the first halves of Episodes 1 and 2 and at points in Episode 8,

where first person narrating briefly surfaces. The following extract from Episode 1 is an example of the brief emergence of first-person narrating:

4. they went straight into classrooms
5. everyone was reading their book
6. so I got out mine
7. and started to read too
8. then my teacher come in
9. 'all right then kids I'll have you into the drama studio'
10. so they went into the drama studio listen to today's play

The changes of stance Emma makes here may be indications of her ambivalence about her peers: feeling separate but wanting to be one of the crowd, a characteristic also shown in her distancing use of full names for members of the class.

Narrator functions: In her role as narrator, Emma uses the narrative function most of the time. However, in Episode 8, when she takes up the stance of first person narrator, she uses the communicating, testimonial and ideological functions. These three functions are very close and often appear in combination, as the following examples show:

Communicating function, in combination with the testimonial function, implying privileged knowledge of how things are run:

127. and she wanted her sister to come
128. but she wouldn't be allowed

Communicating function, sharing information:

132. I got one or two pictures hang on the walls

Testimonial/ideological function, testifying to the appearance of the rearranged classrooms, also offering the opinion that the girls' arrangements are superior to the untidy boys.

133. soon it looked ever so nice
134. had curtains on the windows
135. and had nice bright toys everywhere
136. and the bedroom looked ever so nice
137. all the pictures and blackboards were removed
138. one half was the playroom
139. another half was the bedroom
140. it was very nice and colourful
141. in the boys' bedroom had all model air-planes and all posters of war
142. that looked quite good for the boys
143. but it was-had nice coloured bedspreads
144. and it had robots and Scalextric all over the floor
145. the clothes messed it up
146. as for the girls' bedroom that was much better

Testimonial/ ideological function, implying that boys and girls had to be kept apart and that the boys had to be controlled by equally untidy (male?) teachers, at night.

147. in their area that was made into sitting room they had big boards closing over to stop them from going into the other room
148. in the classroom which wasn't a class room -the other room- it was made into a teachers' bedroom
149. they slept in the same room as the boys
150. I don't know why
151. they had wine bottles and crisp packets everywhere where'd been eating and in the foyer

The last words of this sequence: 155.they didn't have to work, fulfill an ideological function, making it plain that a 'home-like' environment has now been created; 'work' only happens in school.

Genette's fifth narrating function, the directing function where the narrator regulates how the narrative discourse should be used, is not taken up by Emma in 'Virus Hit School'.

## 2.2 Analysis of 'Virus Hit School' using Barthes's Connotative Codes

Barthes saw readers engrossed in novels as people engaged in discursive activity, picking up clues which they progressively synthesise to form concepts of plot theme and character, activating, as they read, the connotative codes used by the author. This second narratological analysis of 'Virus Hit School' was carried out to discover whether the process of reading/listening to it would activate Barthes's five codes in the mind of a reader/listener i.e. whether the text embodied several layers of meaning (Barthes, 1972, op.cit.). I now expand the description of the five codes given in Chapter Six, then demonstrate how they work in an extract of 'Virus Hit School', adapting the lay-out and abbreviated references devised by Fox (1993, op.cit.), following Barthes (1972, op.cit.).

### 2.2.1. The Five Codes

The proairetic code structures the story in terms of actions which tell the reader what happened; it takes its meaning from the story's closure and is carried not only in the verbs used but also in the implications of what characters say and do.

The hermeneutic code raises questions in the mind of the reader, compelling attention and the desire to know what will happen next. It creates suspense through enigmas followed by resolutions.

The semic code is present in hints of meaning throughout the text which the listener can synthesise to create characters.

The symbolic code is present in details which the reader can synthesise to create the larger themes of the whole narrative. Such details may be conveyed directly by the teller or indirectly through actions, characters, speeches, etc. As we saw in the case of 'E.T.Returns (1)', these details are frequently organised as paired oppositions.

The cultural code is present in references to the social world which the reader is likely to recognise and accept as real.

#### 2.2.2. Exemplary extract from the analysis of 'Virus Hit School', using Barthes' codes

The extract (11-47) covers Emma's move from a realistic representation of school life into a fantasy world; it is divided into units of meaning or *lexia*, as Barthes called them, in each of which several codes can be perceived.

KEY: Reference to the five codes will be signalled in the analysis by the following abbreviations: proairetic code: ACT; hermeneutic code: HER; semic code: SEM; symbolic code: SYM; cultural code: REF. The parts of each *lexia* selected for comment are marked by asterisks\*, commentaries bounded by square brackets [ ].

11. today's play was all about chemicals

12. and in the play was Steven R Ann-Marie C Dean J Louise B Gaynor P and some other kids

[\* today's play REF: normal routine of the school week;

\*\* all about chemicals REF: importance of the laboratory in the events surrounding the 'School Under Seige' project, discussed in previous lesson.

\*\*\*Steven R. Ann-Marie C Dean J Louise B Gaynor P and some other kids REF: members of the class sitting around Emma as she spoke; all those named were from the same village as herself; her use of full names for each pupil, as in the register, suggests distance from them rather than intimacy.]

13. first of all they had Dean J-- coming on stage as a professor  
14. 'this is a very dangerous chemical  
15. this can kill  
16. let me take the top off  
17. and you can see why' (*'Italian' accent*)

[\* Dean J-- REF: Dean had been accused of harassing Emma on the school bus, so she was likely to have been afraid of him and to have seen him as dangerous;

\*\*coming on stage as a professor SEM: Dean assumes the character of a powerful person with secret dangerous knowledge; also ACT: the move into the world of pretence;

\*\*\* (*'Italian' accent*) SEM: this was Emma's own description of the accent which she thought was menacing (also used for the professor in another of her stories, 'The Mouse in the Maze', see Appendix, p.417);



\*\*\*\* very dangerous chemical ...can kill REF: school science teacher talking about safety in the lab. and HER: Enigma 1: will the chemical kill Dean?]

18. he took the top off
19. and all this dangerous fumes and smoke come out
20. and then he took a deep breath
21. and dropped it
22. then he just fainted

[\* fainted HER: Enigma 1 sustained: what will happen to Dean? ]

23. a few minutes later he woke up behind the stage
24. he said 'what's happened?' to Ann-Marie
25. 'its all right
26. you've dropped the chemical
27. are you all right?'
28. 'yes I am all right'

[\* he woke up HER: Enigma 1. Solved: the chemical does not kill Dean;

\*\* yes I am alright HER: Enigma 2 arises: what does the fainting fit portend?]

(Episode2)

29. later on we were in the classroom
30. it was Maths

[\* it was Maths REF: normal school time table continues, HER: suspense: what will be the ultimate effect of the dangerous fumes?]

31. Dean began to feel weary again
32. took him up to the sick room/ 'I'm all right' (*protesting tone*)
33. laying in bed
34. he was sick
35. then later on the nurse went out to tend to some children with nosebleeds

[\* took him up to the sickroom ACT: change of location makes it clear that something serious is wrong with Dean; REF: school medical room is the place pupils go when they are really unwell

\*\* he was sick HER: suspense about Dean's condition maintained;

\*\*\*(*protesting tone*) SEM: Dean does not want others to think he is ill;

\*\*\*\* children with nosebleeds REF: a few weeks prior to the telling of this story Dean had had a spectacular nosebleed during an English lesson, which had shocked some of the class].

- 37. all at once he lost his hair
- 38. turned green
- 39. and horrible yellow teeth hanged down at each side of his mouth
- 40. and his nails slashed the covers as he got out
- 41. and went in

[ \*all at once he lost his hair/ turned green/ and horrible yellow teeth hanged down  
at each side of his mouth ACT: transformation of Dean into a monster  
&HER: end of the suspense about Dean's condition, i.e. Enigma 2 solved;  
REF: Dracula films and werewolf animations seen on T.V./video;

\*\* slashed the covers SEM: destructive character of Dean's transformation made clear;

\*\*\* whole passage SYM: people who seem threatening in real life are transformed into monsters in the story as a way of commenting on their power and simultaneously ridiculing them.]

- 42. in one of the little rooms at the side was a lady
- 43. she was typing
- 44. he ripped open the door
- 45. and she screamed as he leapt up
- 46. and bit her on the neck
- 47. she looked very weary

[\* in one of the little rooms at the side was a lady/ she was .typing: REF: secretary's office in the school building;

\*\*he ripped open the door/ he leapt up and bit her on the neck: ACT: now fully changed, Dean's actions are positive and violent, in contrast to his earlier fainting and sickness; HER: solution of Enigma 2 reinforced. SYM: theme: ordinary looking people can become dangerous beasts;

\*\*\* she looked very weary: SYM: the cycle of transformation begins again].

### 2.2.3 Findings

In terms of Genette's narrative categories, 'Virus Hit School' is typically chronologically ordered in a sequence of scenes punctuated by short pauses and summaries; it uses singulative frequency and is mostly unfocalized. The narrating stance adopted is usually that of the omniscient hidden narrator using third person subsequent narration; the narrator most commonly takes up the narrating function. This basic pattern is varied from time to time by deviations from the chronological in the form of flashbacks and flashforwards, by the use of iterative frequency and the use of fixed/variable focalization. Testimonial, communicative and ideological narrator functions are taken up, in different combinations. Narrating stance occasionally moves from third- to first-person subsequent narrating,

so that the narrator, instead of being hidden and omniscient, becomes momentarily a member of the fictional peer group.

The analysis according to Barthes' codes shows that the proairetic code (ACT) which takes its meaning from the closure of the whole (when everything is put to rights and everyone goes home) enables the listener/reader to track the transformations of human beings into monsters and back into human shape; within this trajectory, the same code tracks the transformation of the school building into a home and then back into a school. The hermeneutic code (HER) maintains both interest and suspense by repeatedly patterning the narrative as enigma-- suspense --resolution, winding the reader into the unfolding of the whole narrative and counting on his/her desire to know what will happen. The cultural code (REF) is activated by references to school life, to the intertextual contexts of the English resource booklet, 'School Under Siege' and different scripted film versions of the Dracula story. The semic code (SEM), though less prominent than the others, is present in hints of meaning which the reader can synthesise to create sketches of characters, though these are not developed in subsequent action. For example, in Episode 3, the secretary's husband treats her as though she were a child, not an adult woman (TUs 51-55). The symbolic code (SYM) is activated by the creation of the first and subsequent monsters. All the characters who go through this negative, dehumanising transformation are representations of people Emma found threateningly powerful in real life: the boy who bullied her when teachers were not there to protect her, the secretary in charge of registers, who checked the delivery of absence notes, the Deputy Head, a school authority figure and the Head of Science, a disciplinarian possessed (in Emma's eyes) of esoteric knowledge. On the other hand, the

symbolic code is also activated, in Episode 8, by the positive, humanising transformation of the school into a home by the pupils; (more successfully by the girls than by the boys). Thus, paired thematic oppositions are signalled.

## 2.3 A comparison of the findings of analyses of 'Virus Hit School' with those of similar analyses of 'Ribs' Runners'

### 2.3.1 'Ribs' Runners': the context of composition

Michael was an experienced reader who enjoyed writing stories. During the 'School under Siege' project, having completed some of the tasks in the resources booklet, he asked Mrs. B. if he could write an escape story. She agreed and suggested that there might have been some hidden reason why the authorities wanted to keep the pupils in school so long (three weeks is suggested in the booklet). Michael took up this idea and spent time poring over a duplicated copy of the plan of the (actual) school building. Talking with Chris and other boys, he worked out where surveillance cameras and machine guns could have been mounted and how pupils could have evaded both, as they planned and carried out an escape. Thus, the origins of Michael's story lay partly in talk with peers (all boys), several of whom feature as characters in the story; inevitably, they were an interested audience. The complete copy of Michael's story is in the Appendix (p.422). 'Virus Hit School' was rooted in solitary thought and imagination; Emma had not been present in the lesson preceding the one where she recorded it and did not share it with anyone whilst she was recording.

### 2.3.2 Immediately observable differences between 'Ribs' Runners' and 'Virus hit School'

Any narrative can be seen as a version of a hypothetical story (Genette, 1980 op.cit.). Although the same story-outline (pupils kept in school for three weeks because of an outbreak of a contagious disease) had been offered to both Michael and Emma, they seem to have had rather different stories in mind as they composed their narratives. Emma's narrative is about the origin and perpetuation of the 'disease' and the reinvention of the school as an enjoyable and safe place to be. Michael's is about a group of pupils planning and carrying out their escape from surveillance and imprisonment. In 'Virus Hit School', six episodes describe the spreading vampire affliction, which, we learn in Episode 7, is the reason why the pupils cannot go home. In 'Ribs' Runners' the pupils' imprisonment because of a rabies outbreak, is already an established fact at the beginning. Emma's narrative uses dialogue in only four of her nine Episodes and has a contemplative aspect, especially in Episode 8, where she details the transformation of the school building; Michael's narrative drives rapidly forward on a basis of dialogue and energetic action, in which violent conflict is an important element. Both narratives lead ultimately to the pupils' departure from the school building, though, inevitably, in different circumstances.

### 2.3.3. 'Ribs' Runners': Summary

(The story consists of 2,141 words, which I have divided into six episodes, each consisting of several paragraphs; for ease of reference, I have given each episode a title. Like 'Virus Hit School', the action is imagined as

happening in the actual school where the story was composed. For full text and related writings by Michael, see pp. 422, 421).

#### Episode 1: The Secret Threat

The pupils are in quarantine because rabid mice have been found in the Science laboratory. An armed helicopter, equipped with powerful monitoring equipment, hovers over the building. Michael and Chris overhear a conversation between a trooper and his superior which reveals that the pupils are to be gassed.

#### Episode 2: In Assembly

The headteacher explains to the assembled school that the patrolling helicopter is making sure no one leaves the building for the sake of other people's safety. Anyone leaving the building will be caught and may be shot. Michael makes up his mind to escape.

#### Episode 3: The Plan

Michael ('I', a.k.a. 'Ribbs') persuades a group of friends: Chris (a.k.a. S. ), Jay, James, Paul ( a.k.a. Smithy/the chubby Welsh boy), to join him in an escape attempt; he outlines his plan to them.

#### Episode 4: Crisis and Response

Suddenly, the boys see a cylinder of poisonous gas being carried by the armed helicopter. Michael directs them in accelerating preparations for escape: Paul acquires a box of matches from a teacher, S---, a smoke pellet and Michael himself a gadget which he uses to fell a soldier who has entered the building; he takes over the soldier's machine gun.

#### Episode 5: The Escape

Fighting breaks out between Michael's group and the troopers who are guarding the building. Whilst the helicopter backs up the guards, the boys go into an underground tunnel. When soldiers block this escape route with an incendiary bomb, the boys get through a manhole into the Science lab.

Through Michael's skill and daring, they escape from the building, despite injuries.

#### Episode 6: Counter-attack and Victory

When the boys get out of the building, Michael sets light to grass, creating a smoke screen and causing the helicopter to crash; the helicopter is smashed to pieces, the soldiers retreat back into the building and the wounded boys help one another to escape from the scene.

#### 2.3.4 Analysis of 'Ribs' Runners' according to Genette's system compared with that of 'Virus Hit School'

#### 2.3.5 TENSE

Order: like 'Virus Hit School', 'Ribs' Runners' is mostly chronologically ordered but anachronies are much more in evidence. There is a total of 21 flashbacks, of which two are true analepses, referring to story time before the beginning of the narrative (10-12 & 38). In Episode 3, eight flashforwards are used during discussion of the boys' projected escape bid and the outlining of Michael's escape plans which are followed through in the ensuing action.

Duration: in 'Virus Hit School', scenes are regularly separated by short pauses and summaries. In 'Ribs' Runners', there are two lengthy pauses: one consists of a description of the helicopter, Blue Thunder, which is the boys' chief adversary (11-17, Episode 1.), the other is the outline of Michael's escape plan (80-84, Episode 3.). From Episode 4 onwards, the narrative consists of scenes containing dialogue passages or sequences of rapid, often violent, action, interspersed with summaries; it drives speedily



to the ending. There is one ellipsis caused by the temporary unconsciousness of the 1st person narrator:

178. ..I hit my head on the wall
179. and blacked out.
180. I must have only been out for a few seconds because the place was still chaotic.

Frequency: iterative frequency is more common in this narrative than in 'Virus hit School' because of the vigorous and often repetitive activity the characters are engaged in, e.g.: 292. And lots of soldiers were felled as they appeared through the door

#### 2.3.6 MOOD

Perspective: As we saw, 'Virus Hit School' contains some fixed and variable focalization, showing what the characters saw or heard from their own points of view. 'Ribs' Runners' includes direct speech or inner speech in almost half of the total number of TUs and, therefore, variable focalization is a more obvious feature of the whole. In the following passage, it enables the reader to understand the nature of the predicament facing Michael and his friends and characterises the individuals involved.

18. The sound of rotor blades came whirring overhead.
19. Instinctively I ducked.
20. Chris followed suit.
21. We waited about 30 seconds
22. then I said, 'Why do we need to be listened upon? I mean we're not criminals!'
23. 'Probably because some of us might try to escape.
24. They're listening for escape plans.'
25. We heard voices from outside .
26. I peeked out of the window.
27. A single trooper was talking to his superior officer.
28. 'Sir, my men are getting bored.
29. They want us to release that gas in there so's we can all go home.'

30. 'We have to wait for further instructions, lieutenant.
31. Tell your men that its not long now!'
32. 'Yes sir!'
33. The lieutenant saluted
34. and walked out towards some hastily constructed tents that I hadn't noticed before.
35. Again the chopper droned overhead.
36. So that neat little bit of info will have to wait till tomorrow!'

Commentary:

(18-21) Michael and Chris have been woken by the surveillance helicopter; they wait for it to pass so that they can talk without being overheard.

(22) Michael asks the question which the reader wants to ask. Variable focalization highlights his indignation ('I mean, we're not criminals!') and is likely to enlist the reader's sympathy.

(23, 24) Chris's answer, focalized from his separate point of view is rational; both utterances straightaway sketch the boys as different characters.

(25-27) The boys begin to eavesdrop.

(28-34) Focalization now switches to the military men outside the window. Their casual discussion of their men's boredom and the intended release of gas into the school building whenever the order is given, characterises them as callous officials, probably attracting more reader sympathy to the two boys.

(35, 36) Focalization moves back to the boys, reminding the reader of the fact that they must not speak whilst the helicopter is overhead. Finally, (36) the inverted commas suggest inner speech, either in the mind of the narrator, 'I', or an assumption shared between him and Chris. The ironic use of 'neat' and the implied intention to share the information with others characterise the narrator.

Distance: unlike Emma in 'Virus Hit School', Michael uses all three kinds of speech representation listed by Genette. Roughly one third of the instances of reported speech are mimetic, bringing the characters and action close to the reader; the remaining two thirds are embedded in the narrative, using tags placed after the spoken words, e.g. 'You awake?' I asked. This form of reported speech is a sign of Michael's experience of written literature, where it is more common than in conversation. The narrative also includes representations of the reported inner speech of the narrator and of Paul (125), one of his friends:

- 36 'So that neat little bit of info will have to wait till tomorrow!'  
45. 'I'm sure, 'El Supremo', 'cause I know different', I thought to myself  
49. 'That's what you think!' I said to myself, 'cause I'm getting outta here any way I can!'  
125. 'Got'em' he said triumphantly in his mind.

Each of these examples occurs in a situation where a character must keep silence for his own and his friends' security; telling the reader the character's thoughts is the only way Michael can make his feelings and intentions known.

I found one example of transposed speech (i.e. the gist of a character's supposed words represented) in this narrative:

80. The plan was that we would leave the team area
81. and stay up the uncameraed area which was the main corridor that goes straight through the school through to the science labs.
82. We would then distract the guards at the main entrance, possibly with a smoke pellet.
83. Our back-up plan was to go through the sewers

There is also a single example of narratised speech (no attempt to represent the supposed words):

77. ....I told them more of my plan

All of these uses show that Michael is capable of varying focal length as well as focalization.

His tagging of reported speech shows a characteristic effect of schooling: teachers tend to encourage pupils to find synonyms for 'said', the verb they use most often. My impression is that Michael has taken such encouragement to heart since he uses a large number of synonyms. An example from Episode Four:

96. 'It's Butolinus Toxin!' he gasped.
97. 'What the hell's that S?' inquired Paul.
98. It's one of the most dangerous substances known to man!' he replied
99. 'You sure, S?' I asked.
100. 'Positive!'.

(There is no way to be sure that Michael is not being ironic, here, about teacherly ways.)

### 2.3.7 VOICE

In 'Ribs' Runners', Michael uses first person subsequent narration most of the time, with first person prior narrating for outlining the escape plan (Episode 3, 80-84); his narrating stance is similar to Karen's in 'Casualty', discussed in Chapter Nine, where most of the narrative is focalized from the point of view of the narrator. 'I' is called 'Michael' by one of the other boys on one occasion and, on another, is referred to as 'Ribs' (the real Michael's nick-name). On three occasions, a hidden, omniscient, third person narrator is used: for the description of 'Blue Thunder'(11-17) and to relate what happens to Paul and to S. (Chris) when they go out of Michael's sight, to carry out his instructions.

Narrator Functions: like Emma, Michael uses the narrative function most and the directing function not at all. The communicating, testimonial, ideological functions are used frequently in conjunction with the narrative and, as in Emma's case, are difficult to disentangle from one another. Because the opposition between pupils and authorities includes death and destruction, the ideological function is particularly prominent.:

- 87. Suddenly I noticed a large cylinder being carried by a chopper over the school.
- 88. On it was a marking of the skull and crossbones!
- 89. I suddenly realised what it was.
- 90. It was the container holding the gas.

The fixing, here, of the narrator's attention on the helicopter's freight is an instance of the narrative function, since it triggers the implementation of the escape plan. The mention of the cylinder with its macabre warning sign underlines the deadly intentions of the authorities in charge of the school, saying, in effect: 'this is what happened' (communicating function) 'I was

there and saw it happen' (testimonial function) and 'this is how little the military and school authorities cared about the pupils' safety' (ideological function).

#### 2.4 A comparison of the findings of analyses of 'Ribs' Runners' and 'Virus Hit School' according to Barthes' connotative codes

Barthes' connotative codes can be discerned throughout the text of 'Ribs' runners', as in 'Virus Hit School'. However, because the total shape of this narrative is different, particularly its ending, the codes are differently patterned and interlinked. I now divide the first 20 lines into four lexia and display the codes that I have found in each.

KEY: Reference to the five codes will be signalled in the analysis by the following abbreviations: proairetic code: ACT; hermeneutic code: HER; semic code: SEM; symbolic code: SYM; cultural code: REF. The parts of each lexia selected for comment are marked by asterisks\*, commentaries bounded by square brackets [ ].

1. As the helicopter patrolled past the window  
the sound of rotor blades woke me up.

[\*patrolled past the window ACT: something/body needs to be closely watched; \*\*helicopter REF: suggests police surveillance of those breaking the law; HER: Enigma 1: who is the criminal?

\*\*\*SYM: the sound of rotor blades woke me up strong contrast between the stillness and silence of sleep and the activity and noise of the machine].

2. 'S---', I inquired.
3. 'Yeah?' he replied.
4. 'You awake?' I asked.
5. 'I'm having trouble sleeping.'
6. 'Yeah! Me too'.
7. He stopped for a minute.
8. 'Has the chopper been round here yet?'
9. 'Fraid so.
10. It might still be monitoring us!'

[\*S--- REF: member of the class

\*\* 'Has the chopper been round here yet?' HER: Enigma 1 maintained

\*\*\* It might still be monitoring us HER: Enigma 1. Resolved: S---and 'I' must be the criminals]

11. The helicopter was a 'Blue Thunder', the only one of its kind.
12. It could 'listen in' on different conversations through a unique bugging device.
13. It also had heat sensors so it could detect a man crawling through undergrowth.
14. The searchlight it carried was 30,000,000 candlepower
15. and could detect an insect on the ground.
16. It also incorporates inch-thick armour to protect its occupants and a 20mm cannon that can deliver 4,000 rounds a minute!
17. It had been described as the 'ultimate fighting machine'.

[\* Blue Thunder SEM: name gives the armoured vehicle the status of a character in the story;

\*\* 'listen in'... detect... carried SEM: these words confer human characteristics on the machine;

\*\*\*bugging device, heat sensors, searchlight, candlepower, inch-thick armour, 20mm cannon, 4,000 rounds a minute, fighting machine SYM: indicate oppressive power of heavy equipment aboard Blue Thunder;

\*\*\*\* a man crawling through undergrowth... an insect on the ground SYM: indicate comparative weakness of the objects of Blue Thunder's attention; HER: Enigma 2 is raised: why such a uniquely and disproportionately powerful armed machine ?

\*\*\*\*\* REF: military specifications of the helicopter from novels/ films about James Bond (?)].

18. The sound of rotor blades came whirring overhead.
19. Instinctively I ducked.
20. Chris followed suit.

[\*the sound of rotor blades came whirring overhead ACT: repetition of surveillance activity; HER: Enigma 2: suspense maintained;

\*\* instinctively I ducked: SEM: the human vulnerability of the narrator is stressed ;

\*\*\* Chris followed suit: SEM: the narrator is the dominant character of the two individuals; SYM: the relative positions of Blue Thunder (in the air) and the humans (crouching on the ground) brings out the thematic opposition to be explored in the whole story.]

### Comment

In this story, proaireticisms pinpoint the stages Michael and his friends go through as they move from a physically and psychologically oppressed position to controlling their own destiny by their own wits. In the process,



they learn to cooperate as a group, under Michael's leadership. The ending, where the battle between Michael and the helicopter results in the destruction of the machine and the escape of the boys, provides a justification for Michael's leading role in the group. As in 'Virus Hit School', the hermeneutic code draws the reader through the text by creating interwoven moments of interest and suspense. As regards the cultural code, in creating a fictional world, the narrator of 'Ribs' Runners', like that of 'Virus Hit School', refers to the actual school building, its routines, staff and pupils as well as to film/written literature, such as stories and films about James Bond; the resources booklet, though not referred to directly in either story, is an underlying reference. The semic code is used throughout; it is visible in the extract above, in hints of Michael's leadership qualities: his reactions are quicker than Chris's, he wakes up first and he is the first to react appropriately to the return of the helicopter. The characters of all the boys in the escape group are sketched by such hints, so that anyone with a knowledge of the class who read the story, would have recognised who is being referred to. Clearly, this is an effect of the situation and context of composition. The symbolic code is apparent in paired oppositions, like those indicated in the analysis of the 'Blue Thunder' passage above (11-17), which are present throughout the whole story. Thus, we see that, for all their differences at every level, 'Virus Hit School' and 'Ribs' Runners' both display Barthes' connotative codes; both are, therefore, polysemic.

## 2.5 Tracing the development of literary competences from 5 to 13

I now place the detailed literary competences of Emma and Michael which have been revealed through my analyses of 'Virus Hit school' and 'Ribs'

Runners', alongside those uncovered by parallel analyses of the oral stories of two five year olds, Josh and Sundari (Fox, 1993, op. cit.). In this way, I gain a series of glimpses of developing literary competences. Clearly, the data from the two studies differ in many ways and there are many contextual variables, not least the difference between the five year olds' storytelling context of home and parent and the more constraining setting of classroom, peer group and teacher experienced by Emma and Michael. Nevertheless, the four tellers shared the English language and the culture of England in the early 1980s as it affected young people. They also shared not merely the human propensity to tell stories but an enthusiasm for doing so. All four fictionalised themselves in their different ways in order to *'create episodes of what might be, to try out possibilities in other worlds and to give their feelings a place to be, a local habitation and a name.'* (Meek, 1991, op.cit.:113).

The age difference of 7-8 years between the two sets of storytellers is considerable but their differences with regard to experience of reading are probably more important in a discussion of literary competences because it is assumed that it is from reading literature that we learn such competences (Culler, 1975, op.cit.). Josh and Sundari were not independent readers when they told the stories Carol Fox collected but they were growing up *'in literate/literary environments'* (Fox, 1993,op.cit.: 161). They had already probably heard hundreds of stories read and told. I have no history of Emma's early years to compare with this but I cannot think that it was similar, since Emma arrived in secondary school at 11, already a 'problem', pointed out by her primary school as in need of remedial help with literacy. The stories she would have heard would have been those read aloud by her teachers but, as I have already made clear, she was frequently

absent from school. Michael's earliest reading history is also unknown to me; during his primary school years, he had been confined to bed by illness and he told me that he had spent many hours reading. He had been enthusiastic about story writing from primary school days. At the time of my study, he continued to read both fiction and non-fiction regularly, often choosing books not written specifically for children or teenagers. (See reading lists, p.421).

## 2.6 The narrative analyses according to Genette's system

Fox describes the simplest possible narrative, according to Genette's categories, in the following terms:

*'told in chronological order with summarized duration and singulative frequency, it has little sense of point of view, few dialogue exchanges and its narrating stance may well be concealed , for the narrator's function is to tell the story events. (Fox, 1993, op. cit. :153).*

An item from my data will serve as example of the simple model; it is the opening episode of a retelling of the story of a film, a 'vicarious' story (Labov, 1972):

there was this girl/and she went to stay at her uncle's house/ and she got there/and her uncle welcomed her in and that/ and by that time it was quite dark/ and she was tired / so she went bed (Classroom performance no. 10: Tricia).

Using Genette's major headings: TENSE, MOOD, VOICE, I now show how the stories of the two five year olds and those of Emma and of Michael deviated from this simple model.

2.6.1 TENSE: (Simple model: *'told in chronological order with summarized duration and singulative frequency'*)

Josh and Sundari: Fox shows that, though their narratives were for the most part chronologically ordered, the five year olds were beginning to use narrative anachronies: occasionally an analepsis, sometimes a kind of primitive prolepsis. They could vary narrative duration, using scenes, summaries and pauses, though ellipses were beyond their competences at the time of her study. They were not confined to singulative frequency, but could signal iterative time in several ways. She was able to identify all of these deviations from the simple model with the children's experience of books.

Emma: 'Virus Hit School' shows Emma had competences, with regard to the handling of time- relations, which were very similar to those of the five year olds. There are a few anachronies in the form of flashes backwards and forwards within the time span of the narrative; pauses, scenes and summaries are all used, though there are no ellipses; singulative frequency is most common, though there are iterative passages too. There is evidence from other texts that Emma's competences included ellipsis and true analepsis (see 'The Whale', p.192 and 'E.T.Returns'(2), Episode 1 (b), p.191). Since it is unlikely that these competences were derived from experience of written literature to any great extent, it has to be assumed that Emma had learnt them as part of her general narrative competence, acquired as part of language learning in social interaction and from experience of T.V. and films on video.

Michael: In 'Ribs' Runners', anachronies are very much more evident than in the texts of either the five year olds or Emma; they include some true analepses and prolepses, as well as simpler flashforwards. Summaries, scenes, long descriptive pauses and an ellipsis are all found and iterative frequency is prominent. Thus, we see that all four tellers are able to go beyond the simple model of the organisation of time relations in narrative and that Michael, the experienced reader, has the most complex literary competences in this respect.

#### 2.6.2 MOOD ( Simple model: ' little sense of point of view, few dialogue exchanges ')

##### Perspective:

Josh and Sundari: Most of the five year olds' narration was unfocalized, told by a hidden omniscient third person narrator but they also accomplished variable focalization, both in dialogue and non-dialogue passages, varying the point of view on narrative events. This was so *'especially when their stories were closely modelled on known stories from books and especially when they included passages of dialogue.'* (Fox, 1993, op.cit.: 121) Fox also attributes her children's accomplishment of variable focalization partly to their experience of taking different roles and different discourse positions in dramatic play.

Emma: Like the five year olds, in 'Virus Hit School', Emma uses unfocalized narration and accomplishes both fixed and variable focalization through passages of dialogue and non-dialogue. Unlike them, she had not had written models to help her in this but it is likely that from

early childhood she had learnt, as they had, from experience of play and daily interaction.

Michael varies point of view adeptly: most of the action of 'Ribs' Runners' is consistently focalized from the point of view of a first person narrator. Since almost half of the total number of TUs contain dialogue, much of it involving several speakers, variable focalization is also much in evidence. Unfocalized narration is used on three occasions.

Thus, we see that all four tellers had moved beyond the simple narrative model, with regard to point of view, showing they were able to use fixed and variable focalization and so involve their listeners/readers in feeling the impact of events as their characters supposedly did.

### Distance

Josh and Sundari: Most of the speech represented in the five year olds' stories came into the category of mimetic reported speech, which has the shortest focal length. They also placed reported speech within surrounding narrative, including subsequent tags, as found in written literature. Most often they used the verb 'said'. Examples of the more distanced forms, transposed and narratised speech, were only found in one story from one of the children; Fox suggests that these forms were probably too challenging syntactically for children of five. There was, however, some use made of narratised thought and verbs of cognition, showing that the children understood that characters have motivations.

Emma used reported speech only; there were no examples of transposed speech or narratised speech. There was a little evidence, in her use of verbs of cognition, that she was aware of characters' motivation. Her use of reported speech is typically mimetic, untagged, but on two occasions in 'Virus Hit School', is set in surrounding narrative, with pre-positioned tagging, a pattern usual in spoken narrative in conversation: she said, '....' (49); 'the man laughed saying'...' (51) (Episode 7).

Michael used both mimetic and subsequently tagged reported speech, as well as both transposed and narratised speech once each, showing that all the literary forms of speech representation mentioned by Genette were in his competences (Genette, 1972, op.cit.). He also used both reported and narratised inner speech to indicate the motivation of characters.

From this evidence it would seem that the literary convention of the subsequent tagging of direct speech was not in Emma's competence, although it was in the competences of the two younger children. 'E.T.Returns(2)' seems to contradict this conclusion because it includes several instances of subsequent tagging in Episode 1 versions (b) and (c), all of which use the verb 'said'. However, these instances occur in the context of much repetition, which has a formulaic ring to it and seems to represent the working of memory in oral narration rather than the more unlikely experience of written narrative text:

- 23. 'it's E.T.
- 24. he's back' said Eliot
- 28. it was
- 29. it's E.T.
- 30. he was back
- 34. 'hello E.T. its nice to see you back'
- 35. 'hello it's nice to see you back' said E.T.

- 56. it was E.T.
- 57. 'he's back'
- 68. 'I like teddies' said E.T.
- 69. 'I don't know what they really are
- 70. I've never seen one before' said E.T.

The usage, in a narrative which had no written text source, may be connected with the separate characterisation of E.T. and Eliot, requiring the use of names (see discussion in Section 1.4.2 above, this chapter).

If subsequent tagging of direct speech had been well established in Emma's literary competences, she would, presumably have used it in 'Virus Hit School'. I assume that she had not heard this pattern often enough in narratives read aloud and, unlike Michael, she had not done enough independent reading of complex texts to have acquired it in that way. Her use of pre-positioned tags would have been acquired through her regular experience of conversation.

### 2.6.3 VOICE (Simple model: '*narrating stance may well be concealed, for the narrator's function is to tell the story events*') )

The ability to reinvent oneself as a narrator and to create a fictive narratee is a vital literary competence which implies the ability to appreciate a point of view other than one's own.

Josh and Sundari took on the narrator role in different ways, taking different stances, though both used third person past tense narrating most of the time. Josh as narrator remains hidden most of the time, surfacing only occasionally to comment on the action; his stance is that of the enthusiastic creator who invites his listener/ reader into his storyworld and



offers them the chance to re-live the story, as he does himself. Sundari, as narrator, makes frequent interpolations in the course of the narrative, discussing and often de-bunking it.

Emma used third person past tense narrating, taking up a stance similar to that of Josh: hidden most of the time, surfacing rarely to make a direct comment. Otherwise, she keeps the illusion of the story world intact, tacitly encouraging her listener to accept it, as she does.

Michael's stance is different from all the others since he uses a first person narrator who is also the central character in his narrative. The whole piece is constructed around the 'I' whose outstanding qualities are gradually revealed in the course of the action: his alert observation, understanding, ability to devise escape plans, to persuade others to join him, to give orders, to cope with disaster, to bear pain, to care for his injured friends.... He does not address the reader directly, but threads an unspoken first person commentary on the action, particularly in the first half, by means of reported inner speech and narratised thought.

Thus we see that, in their different ways, all four tellers move away from the simple VOICE model, though, in 'Virus Hit School', Emma does so least of all.

### Narrator functions

Both Josh and Sundari use the narrative function extensively since, if a narrative is to be told, this function can scarcely be avoided. The other functions, the metalinguistic directing function, the communicating

function and the testimonial function are all used as well, most frequently by Sundari who, as narrator, frequently interrupts the telling to make comments. Neither of them can be said to take up the ideological function which implies a wider experience of the social world than they could have had at five.

In 'Virus Hit School' and 'Ribs' Runners', both Emma and Michael use all of Genette's narrative functions except the directing function (which Emma had used in 'E.T.Returns(2)' when she said, 'this is the end of the story'). Since both of them were spending a proportion of their daily lives in a secondary institution where they were at the base of the power structure, they did have an ideological view of it. Both, therefore, use the ideological function. For Michael, the undercurrent of the narrator's thoughts which must be silent or whispered out of the range of surveillance gadgetry is a way of channelling this criticism. For Emma, the mythical device of bodily transformations of people into monsters carries a critical message with regard to power relations; the transformation and allocation of separate rooms to boys and girls carries criticism with regard to gender relations.

## 2.7 The analyses according to Barthes' codes

Barthes distinguished two different kinds of narrative texts: the 'readerly text', which dominates its readers, drawing them into its illusory world, concealing the codes which would help them appreciate its polysemic nature and the 'writerly text' which, by making clear the codes within it, encourages readers to create the text critically themselves (Barthes, 1973). Fox sees her two five year olds as creating different types of texts: Josh

'lives' his story as he tells it, creating readerly text whilst Sundari, who frequently criticises her own performance as narrator, creates writerly text. Emma can be described, like Josh, as creating an unbroken illusion which she inhabits and conveys with enthusiasm, creating a readerly text; at the same time, the proliferation of monster transformations has to be partly a joke about school because the setting and characters are taken from it so the beginnings of writerly text are also present. The genre Michael chose, fictional autobiography, seems to imply that his story should be believed but since the story is clearly a parody of school life, at its best in the morning assembly scene, where the Head warns that those who try to leave the building will be shot, it also invites disbelief. This is certainly a writerly text, appealing to readers to enjoy his joke and make sense of it for themselves. The difference between the two older storytellers is partly due to the difference in their internalised audiences: Emma's story was really for herself, Michael's for a particular group of friends.

3. The inexperienced reader's literary competences in relation to her recent experience of written narratives

In the second half of the Autumn term, Emma composed some stories which show evidence of literary competences beyond those exemplified so far. First, I refer briefly to 'Billy and the Rocks', a story Emma wrote in the Reading Room with the help of a Remedial teacher after reading a basal reader about a boy carried off by an eagle. I was unable to trace this book, so cannot be precise about its influence on Emma's composition. She also recorded three stories in a tutorial situation with myself, in each case following class readings with Mrs. B; one was 'The Whale', discussed in Chapter Six, the others were: 'The Snare', a response to a poem with the

same title, by James Stephens and 'The Mouse in the Maze', a response to *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* ( O'Brien, 1971). I now discuss the competences apparent in these pieces.

### 3.1 'Billy and the Rocks': summary

Billy left his sister, Emma, and their dog on the beach to climb some rocks. By the time he had reached the top, the tide had come in and he was cut off from land. He stayed there all night, then was rescued by a fishing boat. Next morning the boat began to sink. The men on board who could swim helped to rescue those who could not. Billy swam back to rescue a dog and when he was too tired to swim any more, the dog helped him to swim back to safety. Billy was then reunited with his family.

Commentary: The following features identified in Genette's system of narrative analysis are found in 'Billy on the Rocks' although they were not used in 'Virus Hit School':

- there is a true prolepsis, referring to time beyond the span covered by the narrative:

'..I will have to stay here for the rest of my life.'

- there is a greater proportion of tagged than of mimetic reported direct speech. Beside a single pre-positioned tag, there are five post-positioned tags and two instances of tagging placed in the middle of a speech; all but one include 'said':

'Come on' said Billy, 'I want to climb the big rock'.

'Goodbye', said Billy and ran to the big rock.

The post-positioned and mid-positioned tagging of reported direct speech is usual in *written* rather than oral narrative, so it seems likely that Emma had picked these patterns up from the basal text she had been reading. Such uses are signs of literary competences similar to those of Josh, Sundari and Michael, who were all very familiar with written narrative texts (Fox, 1993, op.cit.).

### 3.2 'The Snare'

Emma's piece was composed a few days after she had heard James Stephen's poem, 'The Snare' read aloud; both poems are displayed on p.354. Here, Anna picks up the role of first person narrator and uses it consistently throughout, as Michael had done in 'Ribs' Runners'. She would have had a copy of the text in front of her at the time of Mrs. B's performance (when I was not present) and may have retained a visual memory of the words on the page; if she did not look at the text but at the reader which was what she usually did she clearly retained the sound of the words; when she composed her own piece in the Reading Room, she had no text (see transcript of this occasion, p.174).

The Snare : James Stephens.

I hear a sudden cry of pain.  
There is a rabbit in a snare:  
Now I hear the cry again,  
But I cannot tell from where

But I cannot tell from where  
He is calling out for aid:  
Crying on the frightened air  
Making everything afraid

Making everything afraid  
Wrinkling up his little face,  
As he cries again for aid  
And I cannot find the place!

And I cannot find the place  
Where his paw is in the  
snare:  
Little one! Oh little one!  
I am searching everywhere.

Emma: the snare

I heard a scream of pain  
but where?  
there -I heard it again  
it was a painful horrible sound of pain  
but I cannot see where it is  
that animal who needed help  
yet no one was there for his aid  
it must be somewhere  
and I heard it again (P)  
there (P)  
it was a rabbit  
its paw was stuck in a snare  
no one was around  
I didn't know what to do  
I was there  
it was a snare  
and the rabbit was stuck in there  
I had to get it out some way (P)  
but (P)  
all my friends left me  
and went to play  
I knelt against the snare  
there (P)  
run(P)  
you're free again

Commentary: As in the case of 'The Whale' I understood that Emma had been genuinely moved by a poem about an animal in distress. I would speculate that her feelings sharpened the attention she paid to Stephens' poem, enabling her to retain much of it. In making her response, she took over some of his language: single words which she would not have used in ordinary conversation: 'snare', and 'aid', and echoes of the persistent rhyming pattern: 'where..snare...there..' and 'pain...again'. What she did was very similar to the 'borrowings' of the five year olds from the stories their mothers read to them (Fox, 1993, op.cit.). She did not, however, simply re-tell Stephens' poem, but entered into dialogue with it and, since he used a first person narrator, so did she. Thus, she showed a competence used by Michael in 'Ribs' Runners'; she had not done this before. In her story, the animal's suffering is intensified (it gives 'a *scream* of pain') building up suspense, especially as she does not say until the tenth line that it *is* a rabbit (a use of Barthes' hermeneutic code); for her thoughts and her words to the rabbit as she releases it, she uses the present tense :

but I cannot see where it is  
it must be somewhere  
there -run-  
you're free again

The effect is to highlight and so emphasise these particular lines.

These uses of language, like the pathetic fallacy to be found in 'The Whale' are the literary competences needed to create poetry.

3.3. 'The Mouse in the Maze' , a response to *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* ( O'Brien, 1971)

Summary

Some men are rounding up mice for experimental use. They catch only a single mouse and deliver him to the professor at the laboratory. He and his assistant agree to put the mouse in a maze. There, the mouse, Edward, suffers several torments including being chased by a large cat. He meets a spider, Binson, and they become friends, helping each other to escape from the cat and from the maze. Edward invites Binson to make a new life with him.

Commentary

In O'Brien's novel, the experience of being a laboratory animal is told as a first person reminiscence by an old rat, Nicodemus. Emma uses a hidden third person omniscient narrator, switching focalization frequently, to convey different perspectives on the action. For example, we first see events from the point of view of the ratcatchers with gruff hearty voices:

1. 'round this side Mick'
2. 'all right Michael
3. don't lose your head'

then from the point of view of the mouse:

16. all these strange hands come down with gloves
17. and shoved him into a cage

These shifts in perspective emphasise the difference in size between mouse and humans. In Episode 4, once Edward is put into the mouse-sized environment of the maze, the scale of the story world changes. Now



a cat, too big for the maze, becomes the ludicrous tormentor who is outwitted by Edward and his new friend, the spider, Binson. By giving her mouse and spider names and feelings, Emma makes it very clear whose side she is on; the interdependence of the two small creatures suggests the power of cooperation and friendship to overcome evil.

#### 4. Discussion

This chapter has reviewed and analysed eight narrative texts composed by Emma across a year, revealing that she had in some measure all the literary competences mentioned by Meek (1988, op.cit.). She knew that story texts are dialogic. She fictionalised herself as both the teller and the told in all her stories even though, most of the time, the omniscient narrator remains hidden. Even in the 'E.T. Stories', which are the most personal and the most opaque to a listener, her awareness that she is involved in discourse is apparent in phrases such as 'the best hiding place you've ever had', in the dramatising of direct speech, the acting out of roles and the redrafting in 'E.T.Returns (2)'. She had a well established feel for intertextual dialogic; in every single composition, she dialogues with her sources, never attempting to simply retail what she has heard or seen. Thus we see that she also understood that story texts are polysemic, a fact which is confirmed by my analysis of 'Virus Hit School' according to Barthes' five connotative codes. The metaphorical power of language is apparent in the themes of all Emma's stories, particularly since they evince both continuity and change from one story to another over several months. From a childhood concern with fears of the inexplicable and anxiety about relations with parents and adults in general ('E.T. Stories'), she moves to a concern for relations between the powerless and the powerful in the

context of school ('Virus Hit School') and in the natural world (The Whale, 'The Snare'). In 'The Whale', 'The Snare', 'The Mouse in the Maze' and 'Billy and the Rocks', her themes develop a moral dimension. She deplores the suffering and death of the whale at human hands; her narrator liberates the screaming rabbit caught in a trap set by other people. In the last two stories, she clearly opts for cooperation between friends as a way to liberation. Lastly, Emma shows that she can manipulate the conventions of several different story genres. In the E.T. stories and 'Virus Hit School', magic is integral to the action, causing and reversing change; all these stories would come into Warlow's category G, as modern derivatives of fairytales in modern settings. 'The Mouse in the Maze' would qualify as an allegorical recoding of fiction in a familiar setting where normal laws of nature are maintained: category N. 'Billy and the Rocks' might qualify as category K: a feelings-centred story where the normal laws of nature are maintained in a conventional setting (Warlow, 1977, op.cit.). 'The Whale' and 'The Snare' obey discourse rules of narrative poems and 'E.T.News' some of the rules of narrative radio and T.V. broadcasts.

On the question of the ongoing development of literary competences: the analyses of 'Virus Hit School' according to Genette's and Barthes' systems have shown that Emma was as accomplished, in terms of literary competences, as Fox's five year olds, with the exception of the use of more literary forms of representing reported direct speech. Analysis of the stories featured in Section Three of this chapter showed that Emma was able to make up this shortfall when she had the opportunity to compose orally in response to recently experienced written literature. Although the gap between Emma's and Michael's competences, shown in Section Two, was considerable, again we saw in Section Three that she was able to

develop a competence he showed, namely the confident and consistent use of first person narration, when she was given the right sort of opportunity, i.e. hearing a poem which used it and then making her own response. It was possible for such sorts of progress to happen because Emma became happier generally over the year as she settled in to secondary school, improving her attendance rate and acquiring at least one good friend to my knowledge and because she was receiving more personal attention than formerly.

These detailed analyses have made visible an inexperienced reader's competences which are not usually apparent to teachers. Without her recordings and my transcripts of them, no one would have known what Emma was able to achieve in terms of narrative composition because, usually, she drew but did not write and it was written stories that were expected and wanted. One can speculate that her narrative and literary competences must have derived in large measure from her passionate commitment to films on video as well as from everyday interaction, daydreaming and telling herself stories. This possibility is considered among my conclusions in Chapter Eleven.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN:

### The Empirical Study: Findings and Conclusions

#### Introduction

I believe that the analyses of my story data which were separately reported and discussed in Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten provide evidence that oral narrative is indeed '*a powerful tool for learning which should be more fully acknowledged in secondary English*', as my working hypothesis at the end of Chapter Six suggested (p.170). In this final chapter, I first summarise and review the findings of all the story data analyses, then describe the teacher interventions which enabled pupils to create their stories. Finally, I address the questions set out at the head of Chapter Seven, including my 'crucial question' concerning the social, educational and pedagogical benefits of oral storytelling by pupils in the secondary English curriculum (p.172).

1. What the analyses of the public stories show (Chapters Eight and Nine)

The limitations of the public story data, which include only one or two recordings by each teller, must be borne in mind. My textual analyses of these data reveal only what the tellers did on one or two occasions. I have already pointed out (Chapter Nine) the differences between the two stories told by Sarah (TWINS, RETURN) and Shelley (TWINS, ACCIDENTS); these differences are reminders that, given the many variables affecting any performed narrative event, an individual's narrative competence cannot

be assumed from a single performance. Both the stage one and the stage two analyses should be seen as providing a general view of the basic narrative competences shown by a group of 12/13 year olds on one occasion.

### 1.1 Stage one: textual analyses, (Chapter Eight)

As I have shown in the paradigmatic case of 'The Bear', the six textual analyses applied to all the public story data uncovered the tacit narrative competence of the members of the mixed-ability English class. The tellers

- tailored their language to fit the educational context and occasion and simultaneously to cultivate their own status and solidarity with the mixed audience they faced;
- created largely coherent narrative texts which they structured, setting an initial problem and a series of complicating actions to form a plot line, followed by a resolution; they elaborated their narratives with orientations and evaluations designed to convince their audience that what they were saying was both credible and worth listening to, i.e. had 'point' (Labov, 1972, op. cit.);
- used 'written language' which indicated that their own stories drew upon, or grew out of, their prior experience of the stories of others which they had heard, read or seen on T.V. or video and
- shaped their narratives according to recognisable literary conventions, creating classifiable story types (Warlow, 1977, op.cit.).

## 1.2 Stage two: three significances (Chapter Nine)

The stage two analyses provided textual evidence of the ways in which the tellers of ten exemplars tried to establish their authority over the audience.

- The first significance: *credibility*, showed how different performers strove to convince the audience that the world of their story, and therefore everything that happened in it, was to be credited. The three kinds of openings: extended orientation statements which made the setting explicitly material, authentications claiming intertextual authority and potted histories, hints of other stories the teller knew but was not telling, were instances of the creation of *vraisemblance* through different kinds of references to the shared world beyond the text (Culler, 1975, op.cit.; See p.184);
- The second significance: *audience awareness*, was particularly visible in the use of evaluative elements, expressing the tellers' own commitment to their stories and implying that the audience should share their perspective on it, i.e. see that the story had 'point';
- The third significance: *the use of 'written language'* revealed the importance of intertextuality. Not one of the tellings was without at least one prior story or script likely to be familiar to the listeners and all could be classified according to the taxonomy of fiction I employed (Warlow, 1977,op.cit.). Thus, all the exemplars had a place in the 'chain of speech communion' (Bakhtin, 1986, op. cit. See Chapter Two).

### 1.2.1 The effect of tellers' commitment to their stories

One effect of the stage two analyses was the differentiation of the 'autobiographical' stories from the rest, particularly as far as audience-awareness was concerned. The much larger number of evaluations used by Dean (HOSPITAL), Karen (CASUALTY), Shelley (ACCIDENTS) and Michael & Chris (ESCAPE), than by any of the other tellers, showed their stronger commitment and their greater keenness that the audience should share their perspective. In different ways, each of the five was talking about himself or herself and so actively working on his or her personal standing in the eyes of the audience, even when this was not really the whole class but a few friends, as in the case of Michael & Chris. All five were strongly, intrinsically motivated, teller and tale inseparable; they *really* cared about their stories and *really* wanted the audience to do so too. This textual evidence supports the opinions of the theorists referred to in Chapter Five who stress the centrality of affect in language, in the discourses of play and of narrative. Where a teller's personal sense of connection with their story was lacking, narrative authority was harder to establish and maintain, as in BEAR, TWINS and FOOTBALL (Chapters Eight and Nine). Even so, all tellers showed they were aware of the need to make narrative moves to capture their audience and get them to listen.

## 2. What the analyses of the private stories show (Chapter Ten)

Emma was the only pupil who failed to carry through a performance in front of the class. She backed out of her solo attempt, saying she had forgotten the story and, later, when a collaborative telling was planned by Karen and Louise to include her, she stumbled and they took over.

However, her private stories, produced over roughly a year, show the same tacit narrative competences as the public stories and are both polysemic and metaphoric. Although her actual audience was only herself, a tape-recorder and, at times, a teacher, she also imagined an audience; thus, her stories are also dialogic. Her themes have a clear and developing moral dimension and she manipulates the conventions of several different story genres as well as using some of the conventions of poetry and T.V. and radio news bulletins. Through the verbal symbolic play of oral storytelling Emma certainly exceeded her normal capabilities as seen in English lessons (Vygotsky, 1978, op.cit.). Her work illustrates and confirms the truth of Pradl's assertion: *'In telling the stories of our reality, both private and public, spiritual and material, we assert a future...a continuing alternative, one we actively construct out of our understanding of past events'* (Pradl, 1982:1).

## 2.1 The comparative analyses of oral and written narratives

The comparative analyses of 'Virus Hit School' and 'Ribs' Runners' indicate that oral composition is comparable to written as regards the handling of time relations, the form and degree of narrative representation and the way the narrating is implicated in the narrative (Genette, 1980, op.cit.). Since the play of connotative codes is discernible in both texts, both are polysemic (Barthes, 1970, op.cit.).

## 2.3 The development of literary competences from age 5 to age 13

My sketch of the development of literary competences shows that, in one particular respect, Emma's development appeared to have stood still by



comparison with that of the other three tellers considered. This was with regard to the use of post-positioned tagging of direct speech, normally found in written narratives, less commonly in spoken narratives. The two five year old children would have picked up this pattern from the continual readings aloud of literature by their parents (Fox, 1993, op.cit.); Michael would have picked it up from reading independently. Emma, the inexperienced reader, appeared not to have acquired the usage at the time she recorded 'Virus Hit School', presumably because she had had insufficient experience of orally mediated written literature as a younger child. Clearly, since she had acquired it after supported reading of a basal text and Mrs. B.'s oral mediation of *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* (O'Brien, 1971), she was able to do so when opportunities were offered. Similarly, she only began to use the first person narrator *after* it had been modelled for her by Mrs. B.'s reading of 'The Snare' by Stephens. It must be added that, by this time, Emma's attendance was improving, she was generally more comfortable in school and seemed very receptive to the stories she heard; clearly such increased well-being is likely to have helped her as a learner.

#### 2.4 Narrative strengths in the age of secondary orality

Emma's work draws attention to the fact that nowadays TV and video are the most common mediators of story in the lives of many, perhaps most, young people of school age. Video-recorded films are probably most important because they offer the keen viewer the chance to look at and listen to a favourite film or sequence again and again, soaking in the experience as others might read and re-read a favourite book. I connect

some of the strengths of Emma's oral stories with such repeated audio-visual experience. I have noted the following:

- Her stories contain very clear images remembered from films: E.T. in the doorway of the departing space ship as the little dog runs up, barking, the human-into-vampire transformations in 'Virus Hit School', the chases in 'The Mouse in the Maze', strongly reminiscent of 'Tom and Jerry' cartoon sequences;
- The spoken language in film most often consists of enacted dialogue, a fact which may have provided Emma with one of her strengths: lively mimetic dialogue;
- Experience of films could have sharpened her awareness of point-of-view and variable focalization, since the use of different camera angles and of changes of focus emphasise such matters;
- The ubiquitous use of music to create atmosphere in films is likely to have affected her emotional appreciation of them, and so the feeling quality of her own stories when she drew upon remembered films.

## 2.5 Voice

Labov (1972, op.cit.) comments that, in his experience, the re-telling of films produced flat 'vicarious' stories, where tellers seemed uncertain of the point. There were several such re-tellings amongst my public story data and one such from Emma, a re-telling of the film 'Orca' which is about a great white whale. (For a transcript of part of this fragment, see

Appendix 3, p.415). On all the other occasions when Emma drew material from films, she was able to combine what she took with other strands of her experience to make an aesthetically satisfying whole. Then, I believe, she found her voice. As Seamus Heaney puts it: '*Finding a voice means that you can get your own feeling into your own words and that your words have the feel of you about them*' (Heaney, 1980, op.cit.: 43). It was the interventions of her teachers which enabled Emma to do this.

### 3. The teacher's part

The socio-cultural and collaborative origins of language, play and narrative have been stressed throughout this thesis. Teaching/learning in the secondary English classroom can also be seen as essentially collaborative activity for both teacher and pupil(s). Emma found her voice partly because of the actions of her teachers who, for their part, became aware of the value of oral storytelling partly because of what she was doing. I now consider two aspects of this collaborative activity, one discursive, the other social: shaping the utterance and helping the inexperienced reader become part of the classroom learning community.

#### 3.1 Shaping the utterance

Karen's story, CASUALTY, was voluntarily told as a confident public performance and might seem to owe nothing to Mrs. B.'s pedagogical skill. However, it would not have happened had she not run the story-telling sessions in such a way that everyone present knew what the rules were and felt that their contributions were welcome. Where Dean (HOSPITAL) was concerned, it was Mrs. B's private talk with him, then her public

scaffolding of his hesitant performance followed by her sensitive fading into the background as he became more confident, which enabled him to assert his authority and finally to hold his audience unsupported (see Chapter Nine). In Emma's case, for every story she told, an orally-mediated outline was first suggested by a teacher. She responded to each outline by enriching it and filling it with story stuff drawn from her own experience, including, of course, her experience of other stories, filmed or written and orally mediated (Bauman, 1986, op.cit.). Where 'The E.T. Stories' were concerned, as teacher, I suggested that she make up a sequel to the film she had been telling me about. The film's clear shape (arrival of E.T. - his adventures with the children - his departure) which Emma repeated, enabled her to take up my suggestion. In the case of 'Virus Hit School', she took her outline from Mrs. B.'s reading of the resources booklet, 'School under Siege' (discovery of dangerous disease in the school population - pupils in quarantine - disease cured - all go home). Mrs. B. read aloud the early chapters of *'Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH'* which include the rats' capture, their imprisonment in the laboratory, experience in the maze and attempted escape; she asked the class to write their own stories about the escape of one animal from the laboratory; Emma adopted this outline. In creating her poems, 'The Snare ' and 'The Whale', she took the poems Mrs. B. had read aloud as statements to which she could reply, using the shape they offered and changing it to make her own views on the treatment of animals by human beings absolutely clear. Had it not been for the involvement of the teacher, as well as the tape-recorder, in each of these instances, Emma's stories would not have been known about by anyone but her and might well not have come into existence at all.

### 3.2 Helping the inexperienced reader into the classroom learning community

During the Spring Term, 1984, Emma told me that she had made a friend and her attendance record began to improve. However, as may be judged from her reaction to the public performance situation, she remained peripheral to the classroom community. In order to make her storytelling visible to the rest of the class, it had to be in written form. I had made raw transcripts of all her stories but when I showed Emma these, she did not want to read them because they were 'too long' and 'not like a book'. In my participant-observer/tutor role, I then rewrote the raw transcript of 'The Mouse in the Maze', putting in punctuation and paragraphs (see Appendix 3, p.420). Emma was willing and able to read this text, which we then cut into sections; she drew illustrations for each piece and mounted the whole on cards to make the pages of a book. Following this, her poems, 'The Snare' and 'The Whale' were similarly typed and mounted for inclusion in a class wall-display of animal poems. Emma was very pleased with all these artefacts. I noted the following moments:

- she took her book out of her bag and it was passed round a table-group during an English lesson; the members of the group read it and showed approval; this had not happened before;
- when the poems were pinned on the noticeboard, James was heard to say, 'Huh! She *copied* that!' as he might have done about anyone else's work. This was a genuine accolade.

These small events were important because they amounted to social acceptance by some of Emma's peers. Like E.T., she 'did make friends and did get praised'.

#### 4. Answering questions and drawing conclusions

The first of the questions listed at the head of Chapter Seven was:

*Are there strengths of pupils' oral language that are being ignored in the secondary English curriculum?*

The findings of the stage one and stage two textual analyses of all the public story data show that, for all the tellers, the physical presence of a known peer audience was a very important, perhaps the *most* important, element of the performance situation; the way in which they were received by that audience could affect their future standing in the class. So, as they spoke, they did their best, exhibiting the strengths of their oral language,

- drawing from memory what they wanted to tell;
- simultaneously composing, as they uttered it, a coherent narrative structured according to shared conventions;
- maintaining a flow of words appropriate to the audience, the curricular occasion, the educational context and the story they had in mind;
- repairing omissions and mistakes quickly as they went along;

- responding spontaneously to audience reactions;
- achieving an ending.

When they were the audience, members of the class paid attention to what was being said most of the time, sometimes responding with laughter or with sceptical facial expressions and occasionally asking questions. There was a charged atmosphere in the classroom, as each person anticipated then took their turn. The novel activity required all participants to think, to listen and to use language differently from the ways expected in lessons dominated by the written mode.

The second question was:

- *What can teachers learn from a 12/13 year old, who persistently avoids writing and yet is able to compose complex stories orally?*

Pupils who persistently avoid writing are often defined by secondary English teachers in terms of what they *cannot* do, the ways in which they do not meet the demands of the educational system. Yet none of them come truly empty-handed. They will know the language and some of the oral stories of the culture of their homes and communities; they are likely to be practised in telling themselves stories about their own lives and futures, at least in the form of day-dreams; because of their reliance on the spoken word and memory rather than the written word, they may be good listeners and they are likely to have experienced many stories on film and on video. Persistent avoidance of the written mode is likely to be associated with poor self esteem, the feeling of being an outsider in school

and therefore with poor attendance as well. The need of such pupils to tell their stories and have someone listen to them may well be acute.

The example of Emma shows that teachers need to make opportunities for inexperienced readers to tell stories in school to audiences they can tolerate (perhaps, at first, simply a tape-recorder or a teacher and only later other pupils); making such provision is a sign that the tellers and their stories are valued. They may engage in self-motivated verbal symbolic play (as Emma did in 'The E.T.Stories') which enables them to think reflexively about their own lives and futures, potentially benefiting their personal development. In oral performance, inexperienced readers, freed from the anxiety and sense of failure they associate with the written mode, will be able to show what they are capable of, in terms of narrative composition. What they achieve may be more complex than their teachers expect, as in Emma's case. She has shown that oral narrative composition is comparable to written in its dialogic, polysemic and metaphoric dimensions. Therefore it is possible that oral telling may enrich inexperienced readers' efforts at written composition too. Furthermore, as the public tellings of Chris & Michael (ESCAPE), Karen (CASUALTY) and Shelley (ACCIDENTS) have shown, experienced readers also enjoy and gain confidence from oral performance.

Finally, I address my 'crucial question' (p.20) :

*Since individuals master narrative discourse as a form of communication, what social, educational and pedagogical benefits could there be from including oral storytelling by pupils in the secondary English curriculum?*



This thesis argues that the historical continuity of oral storytelling is testimony to the personal and social importance of narrative in human life, as summarised in the Introduction (p.12). Today, as in the past, narrative competence is acquired by individuals during socialisation as part of their communicative competence (Hymes, 1964, *op.cit.*) within their primary Discourse (Gee, 1990 *op.cit.*) and, for the most part, outside the reach of formal education.

There are potential social benefits, at the personal and community levels, from including oral storytelling in the secondary English curriculum. All pupils have oral narrative expertise and stories they can tell or learn to tell, which constitute their identity. Welcoming those stories in the English classroom shows that all pupils are valued, including inexperienced readers who, for whatever reason, have not made headway early in the dominant Discourses of education and subject English (Gee, 1996 *op.cit.*). Oral storytelling sessions on a regular basis would be a means of creating social cohesion within an English class, as suggested in Chapters One and Nine, above. The drawing in of tellers and audiences from other communities, both within and beyond the school could contribute to the building of wider relationships between pupils, teachers and community members.

The potential educational benefits to pupils are considerable. My detection, through theoretically based analyses, of narrative and literary competences in the texts of oral stories told within the English curriculum (Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten), legitimates the educational use of oral narratives by pupils. The reflexivity involved in mediating one's life experience through story telling is in itself a form of learning (Pradl, 1982,

op.cit.) as we see in Emma's work (Chapter Ten) and in the 'autobiographical' stories (Chapter Nine). Such reflexivity includes critical thinking about composition, as in 'E.T.Returns (2)', where Emma made three drafts of the first episode (Chapter Ten). The uncovering of comparably complex composition, in both oral and written narratives, makes it plain that the oral mode merits as much attention in subject English as the written. The fluidity of the oral medium and the speed and ease with which changes can be made in it are further justification for allotting it a central place in the secondary curriculum.

The pedagogical potential of oral storytelling by pupils in the English curriculum is huge. Story-telling sessions can take many different forms beyond the straightforward model of individual/pair performances which were the subject of my inquiry. They can include, for example, circle and verbal games and songs, pupils re-telling from a new point of view a story told by a teacher or by a visiting professional storyteller. Stories can be linked to written work and to activities in drama, music, the visual arts. The strategies and patterns of work which can be adopted are probably limitless.

Discrimination against the oral mode in education, underpinned by bias in the examination system towards the easily assessable written mode, perpetuates injustice. For some pupils, it makes education a baffling, discouraging and ultimately unrewarding experience. Adjusting the secondary English curriculum to include oral storytelling by pupils as well as teachers would therefore be an act of inclusive social justice. It would also encourage teachers and pupils to explore together the riches of the diverse community traditions of oral storytelling present in Britain today.

## APPENDICES

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FIG 9.1. THE USE OF ORIENTATIONS IN TEN EXEMPLARS

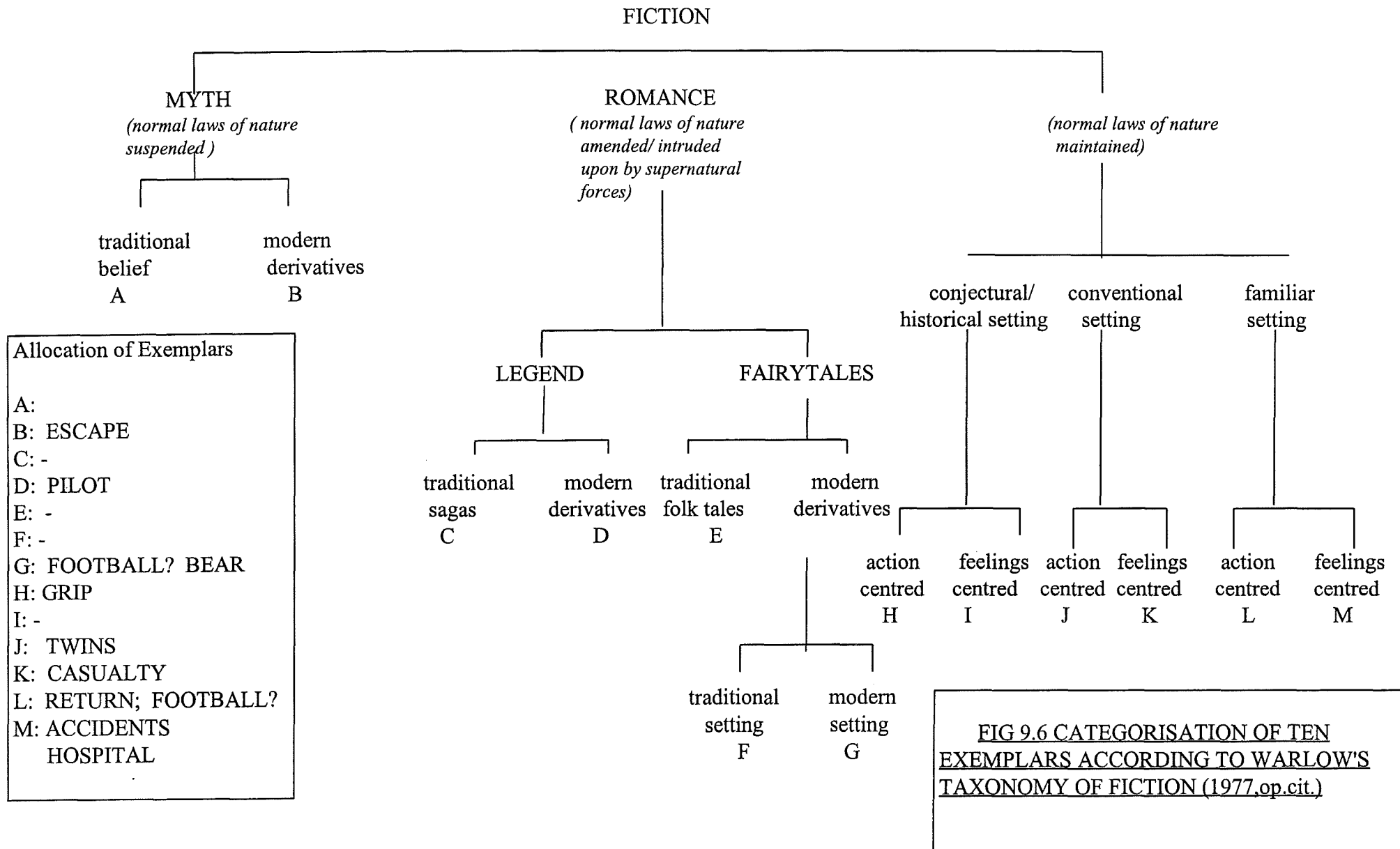
ORIENTATION CATEGORIES:										
Story no	TU Units	Story label	Tellers	Identity: Who?	Spatial: Where?	Temporal: When?	Props: What?	Attribute: What kind?	Behaviour: What doing?	Social: What group?
1	29	[PILOT]	Magnus	6	12	1	7	3	5	0
4	28	[GRIP]	Gary	22	12	2	14	7	10	0
6	28	[BEAR]	James	2	6	9	23	13	0	5
7	41	[ESCAPE]	Chris/ Michael	3	13	0	16	15	11	0
17	16	[FOOTBALL]	Kate/ Gaynor	3	6	1	10	7	3	0
22	46	[TWINS]	Sarah/ Shelley	23	11	3	2	19	3	0
23	92	[HOSPITAL]	Dean	14	19	19	27	8	12	1
24	67	[CASUALTY]	Karen	10	10	14	25	11	9	0
26	60	[ACCIDENTS]	Shelley	14	25	3	20	7	4	2
28	23	[RETURN]	Sarah	7	13	6	4	1	4	0

FIG 9.2 THE USE OF EVALUATIONS IN TEN EXEMPLARS

Story no.	Teller	Label	Embedded Evaluations:				Total	External Evaluations:
			intensifiers	comparators	correlatives	explicatives		
1	Magnus	PILOT	8	4	4	2	17	1
4	Gary	GRIP	5	6	8	5	24	-
6	James	BEAR	8	6	1	1	16	-
7	Chris/ Michael	ESCAPE	10	11	12	10	43	12
17	Kate/ Gaynor	FOOT- BALL	4	3	2	1	10	-
22	Sarah/ Shelley	TWINS	5	4	5	6	20	-
23	Dean	HOSPITAL	15	24	11	8	58	6
24	Karen	CASUAL- TY	19	14	7	6	46	1
26	Shelley	ACCI- DENTS	15	33	13	14	75	-
28	Sara	GRANDAD	7	3	5	6	21	2

FIG 9.4 THE USE OF 'WRITTEN LANGUAGE' IN TEN EXEMPLARS

Story no	Teller	Label	Code	Total no of TUs	Total Lexical words.	Lexical density	Source of Story
1	Magnus	PILOT	P	28	60	2.14	Oral telling
4	Gary	GRIP	G	44	138	3.13	Short story
6	James	BEAR	B	29	73	2.51	Oral telling
7	Chris/Michael	ESCAPE	E	40	101	2.52	Personal experience
17	Kate/Gaynor	FOOTBALL	F	17	52	2.90	Oral telling
22	Sarah/Shelley	TWINS	T	46	120	2.60	Detective novel
23	Dean	HOSPITAL	H	94	206	2.19	Personal experience
24	Karen	CASUALTY	C	67	145	2.16	TV series
26	Shelley	ACCIDENTS	A	89	211	2.37	Personal experience
28	Sarah	RETURN	R	23	51	2.21	Oral telling



## 2. The Public Story Data

### 2.1 Titles of all solo and collaborative performances

( \* : one of the ten exemplars )

#### 13th March, 1984

- |                                    |                    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. The Phantom Pilot*              | (Magnus)           |
| 2. The Severed Hand                | (Shelley)          |
| 3. Motor Bike Accident             | (Paul).            |
| 4. Grip, the Dog Who Was a Thief * | (Gary)             |
| 5. The Haunted House               | ( Sarah)           |
| 6. The Bear *                      | (James)            |
| 7. Escape *                        | ( Chris & Michael) |
| 8. The Icicle                      | (Michael)          |
| 9. The Omen                        | ( Mrs. B.)         |
| 10. The Ghost Protector            | (Tricia)           |
| 11. The Old House                  | (Tracey)           |
| 12. The Ear ( not completed)       | (Emma)             |
| 13. The Tattoo                     | (Graham)           |

#### 4th April 1984

- |                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 14. The Mystery Pilot     | (Ann-Marie & Keeley)   |
| 15. Cruel to be kind      | (Karen, Louise & Emma) |
| 16. Fire in the log cabin | (Magnus &Graham)       |
| 17. The Footballer*       | (Kate &Gaynor)         |
| 18. Alton Towers Mystery  | (Gary & Paul)          |

#### 6th April, 1984

- |                              |                   |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 19. The Dare at the Old Mine | (Chris & James)   |
| 20. Old Tom                  | (Joanne & Paula)  |
| 21. The Four-Poster Bed      | (Tracey & Tricia) |



22. The Twins*	(Sarah & Shelley).
23. Hospital Story*	(Dean)
24. Casualty*	(Karen)

11th April, 1984.

25. Spring-heeled Jack	(Michael & Jeremy)
26-29. Accidents*	(Shelley)
30. Accident in School	(Mrs. B.)
31. Grandad's Return *	(Sarah)

## 2.2 Ten Exemplars: transcripts and related materials

### Story No.1. \* The Phantom Pilot (PILOT) by Magnus

#### Raw transcript:

right-there was this bloke/ he was d--/it's in C--- / he's driving along / up C--- road / and he sees this man-- with a bomber jacket on and his face is all cut up and he's walking with a limp and he's thumbing a lift and he stops and he gets in and he's ' where d'you wanna go?' and he's 'B--- aerodrome ' thing /

so he takes him to B--- aerodrome/didn't say anything on the way / right? / and he got there and he opened the door and there's all these Spitfires there / right? / and all planes / -- and this bloke in the car thought / well / that's been derelict for years /see /

so he goes down pub see his mates and he goes / 'I've just seen this real weird bloke / he's...just took him down the aerodrome from C--- and all these planes there' and they go 'oh shamming' and that..and so/ gets these blokes / gets them in the car / takes them down there and there's no planes there or owt...they think ... at the aerodrome /

and-er- he was driving back through C--- / thinking ' ooh blimey / don't get this ' and sees all these Spit fires going into C--- Hill/ C--- spinneys / yeah--- and when there's no pilots there or anything-- that's it/ think/ good eh?

### Story No. 1: \* The Phantom Pilot (PILOT) by Magnus

#### T Unit Version

1. right-there was this bloke
2. it's in C---
3. he's driving along up C--- road
4. and he sees this man-- with a bomber jacket on

5. and his face is all cut up
6. and he's walking with a limp
7. and he's thumbing a lift
8. and he stops
9. and he gets in
10. and he's ' where d'you wanna go? '
11. and he's ' B--- aerodrome ' thing
12. so he takes him to B--- aerodrome
13. didn't say anything on the way right?
14. and he got there
15. and he opened the door
16. and there's all these Spitfires there- right?-and all planes
17. and this bloke in the car thought well that's been derelict for years- see
18. so he goes down pub see his mates
19. and he goes 'I've just seen this real weird bloke
20. he's...just took him down the aerodrome from C---
21. and all these planes there'
22. and they go 'oh shamming' and that
23. and so gets these blokes
24. gets them in the car
25. takes them down there
26. and there's no planes there or owt..they think ... at the aerodrome
27. and he was driving back through C--- thinking 'ooh blimey don't get this "
28. and sees all these Spitfires going into C--- Hill C--- Spinneys- yeah
29. and when there's no pilots there or anything--
30. that's it think
31. good eh?

Story No. 1: \* The Phantom Pilot (PILOT) by Magnus  
Version recorded a year earlier: T Unit transcript

1. the year was 1945
2. and six spitfires were flying towards C--- Hill
3. it was very foggy
4. and one man saw there was a hill in front
5. he could not warn the others in time
6. so five crashed
7. and there was only one survivor
8. the last man circled round this hill
9. but could see no survivors
10. this man circled two or three times
11. but could see nothing
12. this man carried on towards C--- Spinneys
13. but suddenly ran out of petrol
14. and crashed into C---Spinneys
15. there were no survivors left
16. years later a man was driving his car towards C--- Hill
17. it was very dark and foggy

18. this man saw another bloke standing on the pavement with air jackets on
19. the old fashioned 1945 sort o' thing
20. he offered him a lift
21. and noticed that on his face were lots of scars and scratches
22. and asked him where he wanted to go
23. he said that he wanted to go to RAF B---
24. so he took him there
25. when he was at B---
26. he saw six Spitfires
27. the man got out
28. said a thankyou
29. and walked over to them
30. the driver of the car went home
31. and told his friends about this
32. but unfortunately they said that RAF B--- had been out of use for years
33. this bloke was so confused that he went back to RAF B---
34. and when he got there found that there was nothing there at all and no men and no Spitfires
35. and looked very desolate

Story No.4. \* Grip, the Dog who was a Thief (GRIP) by Gary.

Transcript: T Unit version.

1. right this story's about Grip the dog who was a thief
2. this thief called Tom Gerenard or something like that
4. this story- what it said in the book- was three hundred years old
5. right this is three hundred years old in London
6. there was this thief called Tom Gerenard
7. I'll call him Tom from now on 'cause it's easier
- 8 so there's this dog walking along the pavement one day
9. and he comes up to him
10. and pats him on the head y'know
11. and he gets friends with him
12. and he's trained him to be a thief
13. so they wait in a dark alley somewhere in London
14. and wait till someone comes along that looks wealthy and as though they're carrying a lot of money
15. and then he points to the man
16. and softly clicks his fingers
17. and he goes out the dog
18. and he starts dancing round wagging his tail just making a fool of himself
19. usually the man just pushes by him
- 20 but sometimes he comes up
21. 'n pats him on the head
22. and y'know just mucking round with him
23. but while he's mucking round with him he's the dog's nose-Grip- is smelling out the smell of leather which is got money in-y'know purse - money
24. and when he smells it out which doesn't take long he gets his big jaws over the pocket which he smells it in

25. and rips the whole thing off- everything
26. and then just starts running
27. usually the man shouts ' hey you stop ' y' know
28. and starts chasing after him
29. but he never catches him because he knows all the winding streets and everything round London
30. and then in the end he comes back to Tom
31. and gives him drops the purse
32. and he pats him
33. and says 'good dog' y' know
34. that's all the thanks he needs
35. but Tom was greedy
36. he couldn't be contented with just picking pockets in this way
37. so one cold winter night
38. he stopped a stagecoach
39. and three men jumped out
40. door burst open
41. and three men jumped out with guns
42. and got him
43. and slung him in jail
44. so poor Grip was wandering round the streets nothing to eat apart from the garbage
45. 'n then one day he sees this bloke walking down the path street again
46. he goes up to him
47. pats him on the head
48. this bloke was not another thief
44. it was the minister of the church

Story No.4. \* Grip, the Dog who was a Thief (GRIP) by Gary.

SOURCE STORY 'Grip The Dog Who Was a Thief' from *Five True Dog Stories* ( Gary's hand-written copy ).

Grip was a friendly dog and a friendly dog was just what Tom Gerrard wanted -for Tom Gerrard was a thief. He lived in the city of London, England, more than 300 years ago. Sometimes he robbed big homes and stores. But most of all he liked to steal from people. That's what he trained Grip to do- to pick people's pockets.

First, the man and the dog hid in an alley near a busy London street and they waited. They waited until a man came by, a well-dressed man who might be carrying a lot of money. Tom pointed at the man and softly snapped his fingers. Grip trotted out of the alley and began a happy dog's dance in front of the man. He frisked, he wriggled, he wagged his tail. Sometimes the man just pushed past but most people stopped to pat the friendly dog. This was just what Grip had been waiting for. He would continue to prance and wriggle but he was also using his nose to sniff out the smell of leather- the smell of a purse full of money. It never took Grip long to find what he was looking for. Then his big mouth would open and close over the pocket with the purse in it. And with one powerful tug he'd tear the pocket and the purse away from the man's clothes!

Then Grip would dash away--leaving the man standing open-mouthed. "Hey, you! Stop!" the man usually shouted and the chase would begin. Some of the men could run very fast but Grip was never caught. He knew just where to go. He knew all the twisting streets and narrow alleys of London. He'd race up one and down another. Sometimes he would hide in a dark doorway until the man ran by. Then Grip would come out and run the other way!

Grip always kept running until he was sure he was safe. Finally, with the purse still held firmly in his teeth, he would go back to the first alley where his master was waiting for him. "Good dog, Grip!" Tom Gerrard always said as the dog dropped the purse into his hand. These few words of praise were all the reward Grip worked for. What a team they made, the thief and the dog. Probably Tom Gerrard could have gone on stealing for many more years, if he'd been content just to pick pockets

But Tom was a greedy man. One raw and windy winter night he stopped a stagecoach on a road outside town. The door of the coach burst open. Three men with guns jumped out. Tom didn't stand a chance. He was captured and thrown into jail.

Poor Grip. For the next few weeks he wandered about the streets of London. The only food he ate was bits of garbage and he slept in doorways or dirty alleys.

Then one day Grip saw a man walking down the street. He trotted up to him..and the man patted his head. That was all the lonely dog needed. He followed the man home. But who was this man Grip had chosen to be his next master? Was he another thief like Tom Gerrard? Not at all. The man he picked to be his new master turned out to be minister of a church instead!

Story No. 6 \*The Bear (BEAR) by James (see Chapter Eight, p.\*\*\* )

Story No.7. \*Escape (ESCAPE) by Chris & Michael

C:

1. right now one of me old friends that-from where I used to live
2. told us this story
3. and he was dead scared
4. so we don't know whether its true
5. but what he says-I'll tell it
6. some of his mates found this drainage tunnel
7. and kind of started going up it for dares to see who'd go farthest
8. and kept going up there
9. eventually they kind of found this type of room
10. I'm not sure

M:

11. quite a big place under the manhole like a room weren't it with several pipes leading off

C:

12. they went further and further
13. and found more of these rooms
14. they found all sorts of things up there
15. they found a little newt once
16. the other thing he reckons is that in places it's so dark it makes no difference whether you have your eyes open or closed

M:

17. you can put your hand right up to your face
18. and not be able to see it

C:

19. another thing what they reckon is that these tunnels start off fairly big so you can almost stand up
20. and then they get really small so that you're crawling kind of thing
21. as they were coming back they kind of started feeling faint cause they'd stopped to rest
22. they could kind of see a mist couldn't they?

M:

23. a mist and they wanted to run a mile

C:

24. so they kind of got out quickly 'cause they thought it was gas ( *both laugh* )

M:

25. when they got back to the second man hole (*laughs*) they found this plastic
26. one of them just *happened* to have some matches on him
27. started burning it
28. probably smoke pouring all out of the road under- from the manhole cover
29. so we realised it was plastic
30. so we quickly charged back, stamping it out
31. and one of them just standing there laughing (*mimes the stamping*) panicking
32. then he had to quickly get out because of the gas

C:

33. yes as I say as it got smaller and smaller all the sides kind of got muddy and really hard to crawl along
34. and this is the bit I don't believe
35. just one of 'em got far on
36. and he kind of kept slipping as though something were pushing 'im
37. he kind of reckons there's something up there
38. so he didn't go any further
39. so they're not going to go again
40. they're dead scared now

Extract from Journal: 07.03.84 relevant to Story No.7. \*Escape (ESCAPE)  
by Chris & Michael

*Talked to Chris & Michael about their long (written ) stories. We discussed truth and fiction. I asked why they always -or usually at any rate- wrote fiction. Mark said its' hard to write "truth" because you won't know exactly what was said; you'll be bound to make it up anyway'. They both seemed to feel that real life wasn't a patch on fantasy, anyway. I asked if they had ever had any experiences which they thought good to tell again to other people their own age. Michael looked at Chris and looked around the room before, in a very quiet voice, telling me a tale which I will summarise as follows:*

*Behind the school are fields which have needed draining; they are often flooded in winter. When the new by-pass was being finished, some of this drainage work was being done. They went down into the drainage pipes which are nearly big enough internally for them to stand up in. I gathered that James was with them and he was very anxious to keep the adventure quiet because his father would do him. Mark described how dark it was in these tunnels, how every so often you came to a chamber big enough to stand easily upright in -"as big as the reading room"- but it was so dark that they had to hold hands as they walked along. Eventually they came to a chamber which had a sack lying in the corner. They thought it could have been a body. Touched it with a foot, then turned tail and went home rapidly!*

Story No.17. \*The Footballer (FOOTBALL) by Kate & Gaynor  
T Unit Version

K:

1. once there was this little boy called Tim
2. he was about three or four years old
3. one Christmas he got a new football
4. he wasn't allowed to go out of the garden
5. and he got fed up 'cause the garden wasn't  
very big

G:

6. he were out playing one day
7. and noticed that the garden gate was undone
8. so he picked his football up
9. and walked out towards the school playing  
field

K:

10. back at home his mother came out to tell him his tea was ready
11. but he wasn't there
12. she also noticed that his football had gone
13. and that the gate was open

G:

14. 'nd his mother wondered what had happened to him
15. and she wondered whether he'd got run over on the road that was near the playing field
16. so she ran up to the playing field
17. and he was kicking his football into the goalie's net pretending  
he was one of the players

Story No. 22: \*The Twins (TWINS) by Sarah & Shelley  
T Unit Version

SARAH:

1. before the last war there was a small island
2. but it gradually drifted apart
3. and on the island there lived a family of six
4. there was mad maniac grandma who was religious a mother a father who was a  
fisherman a five year old who wasn't old enough to go to religious ceremonies and two  
twins
5. one was dark and ugly
6. one was blond and pretty
7. and the dark and ugly one loved this boy
8. and he had to go to the war
9. and when he come back she expected him to ask her to marry him
10. but he asked the blond and pretty one instead

SHELLEY:

11. and the day of the wedding came
12. and 'cause this five year old wasn't allowed to go to religious ceremonies like  
weddings and christenings she had to stay at home
13. and help the bride to get undressed
14. they were all at the church
15. and the bride didn't turn up
16. so the other twin said she'd go and fetch her
17. and she went
18. and she sent the five year old out of the room
19. and she pretended to be putting up the dress
20. and she stabbed her twice in the back
21. and shot her twice through the head
22. but before she did it she began to get a bit nervous
23. so she daren't look while she did it
24. but she did it



25. then she ran out  
 26. and she ran back to the church  
 27. they waited  
 28. and she still didn't come  
 29. so the mother went to get her  
 30. and she was waiting for a scream  
 31. but she didn't hear a scream  
 32. they came in  
 33. and she was alive and went on the same  
 34. and after that the other one that got married they moved away  
 35. and went to New York  
 36. and everybody died except this five year old who was now older  
 37. and the twin got older and older  
 38. and a few days before she died she turned mad  
 39. and she went round all the house smashing all the mirrors  
 40. and the next night they found her dead  
 41. but when they found her she'd got two stab wounds in her head  
 42. and they called three detectives in to.....  
 43. each one came up with a different conclusion  
 44. first one said it was god doing his work on her  
 45. second one said the five year old hadn't gone out of the room and she 'd  
     seen it all  
 46. and she'd missed when she stabbed  
 47. third one said she'd done it to herself because she had such a guilty conscience

Story No. 23: \* 'Hospital' (HOSPITAL) by Dean  
Raw Transcript

D : we were told to phone up on Sunday mornin' / from 9.15-9.30 / to see if bed was free  
     in 'ospital / we phoned up / I-I was asleep when me mum phoned up and she come  
     and told me / well / I were a bit scared o' course / so I goes in this day / goes in to this  
     ward 'n just / I met a friend in there and that / this kid (P)

T : what was his name? /

D : Darren C--/ bit of an idiot /

P : bit like you / (*laugh*) you're a right idiot

T : sh! / right / go on Dean / go on }

D : and me mum went have some dinner / and I was in 'ospital on me own like/ I had  
     some dinner and so-- / playing this game an' everything / playing some games (P)

T : when did you have the operation? / the day after or--? /

D : next day / (P)

T : tell us about from / the time you went to sleep that night /

D : I didn't go sleep that night / I was mucking around late / nurse come in and hit us / just about / (*general sounds of disbelief*) 'cause we were mucking around in there / night- night of the oper- night of the ope--

P : might've known!

D : night of the operation / we was reading comics / Beano (*inaudible*) he was in the other side of the bed (*inaudible*)

P : bed ! oooh Dean

D : (*inaudible*) idiot!

T : when you say the night of the operation / Dean / do you mean the night before the operation?

D : yes

T : yeh

D : we 'ad the lights on / and we 'eard the nurse say/ 'get that light out' / and we didn't take no notice / jus' kep' reading / then she come in next minute and hit us / just about (*laugh*) so I turned it out /

T : hit us just about/ did she hit you or just threaten to hit you?

D : she said 'get into bed'/ like this / (*illustrates with cuffing gesture*) and I were just sitting there / looking at 'er / gone out

P : yeah / Dean

P : hard / Dean

D : no/ (*inaudible*) then Darren C-- went to sleep for about an hour or so and then I jumped on his bed / started hitting him/ waking him up /

T : who did? / you did? /

D : yeah

T : why?

D : wanted to wake him up / didn't I ?

T : you mean you couldn't go to sleep and you didn't want to be by yourself

D : no / I just wanted to wake him up (*inaudible*) / have a box (?) / nothing much else to do

T : right / so next day was the day of the operation

D : yeah

T : what happened?/ what happened from the time you woke up ?

D : well (*talking amongst the audience*)

T : can you shush / because that'll come on the tape / that will

D : I woke up in the morning / I had a light breakfast / cornflakes and then - er- / about two hours after I had me light breakfast / I went to this room and had a game of thing (*laughter*)

P : thing?

D : Yeah / a game of thing / I was just playing this game / then nurse come in 'n asked me if I wanted me premed yet and I went / ' uh / all right--I'll have me premed ' / went to bed / had me premed / couldn't sleep /

T : what is it then ?

P : in your hand ?

D : no / they asked me for an injection / but I said I didn't wannit / so they gave me some medecine / had this medecine / first I 'ad pills and -er- I couldn't swallow 'em / so--I had two pills / swallowed them in the end / though 'n then / didn't work / for two hours / I didn't go to sleep / so they give me some medecine / then / I was in this gown already / operating gown / and this hat affair / looked a right clown /

P : (*inaudible*)

T : what did you have on your head ?

D : this operating hat

T : oh yeah...

P.P. . yeah/ my mum's got one of them/ keeps all your hair back ...

D : then loads of people went in for this operation / then they called me / then they suddenly picked me up off this bed / I was about half asleep / they put me on this trolley / wheeled me down / I can remember going through the women's ward

P : huh!

D : didn't see owt though / when-er- going through the *women's ward* / (*laugh*) they called me down to these two doors / then this woman telling me not to worry or summat--I dunno- then she put this mask on me 'face / I dreamed that I was in a plane (*laughter*) dead good / had this mask / then told me to count to ten'n I got to fifteen / (*laughter*) they had to overdose me and next minute I woke up in bed /

T : and it was over

D : yeah

T : how did it feel?

P : did they wake you up when you got into bed ? ( *general talk*)

T : shsh!

D : when I got into bed, this black doctor come up to me / started going 'nnn' like this (*laughter*)

P : what was the game you were playing ?

D : Venus Five(?)

P : that's good / that is

T : O. K. / go on

D : 'n he was trying to wake me up / 'n mum told 'im to leave me alone / 'cause I was half asleep / dozing off / then when I woke up / this nurse asked me if me eye was straight or summat / I can't remember / then nurse come round to me and asked me if I wanted owt to eat / I just went to sleep / (*inaudible exchange*)

D : then / in the morning when I woke up / this doctor come round 'n asked me if I couldn't eat owt because I'd be sick / so I had to eat dry toast

P : eugh

D : so I didn't be sick / then I brought that back up /

P : oooh

D : then me mum collected me at twelve o'clock / 'n I was still dozy then/ walked out of hospital / tripped over some thing coming out of door / sick when I got back home/ had two weeks off

Story No. 23: T Unit Transcript \* 'Hospital'(HOSPITAL ) by Dean  
T Unit Version

1. we were told to phone up on Sunday mornin' from 9.15 to 9.30 to see if bed was free in 'ospital
2. we phoned up
3. I was asleep when me mum phoned up
4. and she come
5. and told me
6. well I were a bit scared o' course
7. so I goes in this day
8. goes in to this ward
9. 'n I met a friend in there
10. and me mum went have some dinner
11. and I was in 'ospital on me own
12. I had some dinner
13. and playing this game
14. I didn't go sleep that night
15. I was mucking around late
16. nurse come in
17. and hit us just about 'cause we were mucking around in there
18. night of the operation we was reading comics
19. Darren was in the other side of the bed
20. we 'ad the lights on
21. and we 'eard the nurse say 'get that light out'
22. and we didn't take no notice
23. jus' kep' reading
24. then she come in next minute
25. and hit us just about
26. so I turned it out
27. she said 'get into bed' like this
28. and I were just sitting there looking at 'er gone out
29. then Darren went to sleep for about an hour or so
30. and then I jumped on his bed
31. started hitting him waking him up
32. I just wanted to wake him up have a box (?)
33. nothing much else to do
34. I woke up in the morning
35. I had a light breakfast / cornflakes
36. about two hours after I had me light breakfast
37. I went to this room
38. and had a game of thing
40. I was just playing this game
41. then nurse come in
42. 'n asked me if I wanted me premed yet
43. and I went 'uh all right-I'll have me premed '
44. went to bed
45. had me premed

46. couldn't sleep  
47. they asked me for an injection  
48. but I said I didn't wannit  
49. so they gave me some medecine  
50. had this medecine  
51. first I 'ad pills  
52. and I couldn't swallow 'em  
53. I had two pills  
54. swallowed them in the end though  
55. 'n then didn't work  
56. for two hours I didn't go to sleep  
57. so they give me some medecine  
58. then I was in this gown already operating gown and this hat affair  
59. looked a right clown  
60. then loads of people went in for this operation  
61. then they called me  
62. then they suddenly picked me up off this bed  
63. I was about half asleep  
64. they put me on this trolley  
65. wheeled me down  
66. I can remember going through the women's ward  
67. didn't see owt though when going through the women's ward  
68. they called me down to these two doors  
69. then this woman telling me not to worry or summat  
70. then she put this mask on me face  
71. I dreamed that I was in a plane dead good  
72. had this mask  
73. then told me to count to ten'  
74. n I got to fifteen  
75. they had to overdose me  
76. and next minute I woke up in bed  
77. when I got into bed this black doctor come up to me  
78. started going 'nnn' like this  
79. 'n he was trying to wake me up  
80. 'n mum told 'im to leave me alone  
81. 'cause I was half asleep dozing off  
82. then when I woke up this nurse asked me if me eye was straight or summat  
83. I can't remember  
84. then nurse come round to me  
85. and asked me if I wanted owt to eat  
86. I just went to sleep  
87. then in the morning when I woke up this doctor come round  
88. 'n asked me if I couldn't eat owt because I'd be sick so I had to eat dry toast so I didn't  
be sick  
89. then I brought that back up  
90. then me mum collected me at twelve o'clock  
91. 'n I was still dozy then  
92. walked out of hospital  
93 tripped over something coming out of door

94. sick when I got back home

95. had two weeks off

Story No.24: \*'Casualty' (CASUALTY) by Karen

Raw Transcript     —

[Key K: Karen; P: Pupil; T: Teacher; D: Dean; A: Anne-Marie; G: Graham]

K : well / I used to live in C-----/ and me best mate / Tracey W-----/ she were ever so tall / 'n this little kid ran by 'er and kicked 'er / 'n she sort of beat 'im up / 'n she got expelled / 'n she were the only - like - mate - who I hung around with / 'n when she 'ad gone / there was no one t'ang around with or anything / 'n I didn't talk t'anybody or anything / and I stopped doing me work / 'n I-I were ever so lonely and so / one night after school / I'd just got done by me teacher 'n -em- there w' -cause I used to live on the main road / and there was a big lorry going by 'n I just ran under it / 'n the lorry come right the way diagonally / crushed three of me ribs / snapped me pelvis / 'n broke both me legs / 'n broke one o' me arms / 'n all- all I can remember was me scream ringing in me ears / 'n then me head banging against the floor / 'n then / next time I knew it / I--I were in bed / 'n this woman were waking me up with all these comics / 'n me mam were by the side of me bed crying.../ 'n when I woke up / I were all dizzy / 'n everything were turning round / 'n I could hardly 'ear 'n 'ardly speak 'n this doctor come up / and took me temperature / 'n that were too 'igh / 'n 'e took me 'eart beat / 'n that were goin' too fast / think it were about 'undred 'n seven 'e said / 'n it--it were about seven o' clock at night now / 'n 'e give me just a biscuit and a drink of orange / but I didn't 'ave a lot / 'n then I just fell to sleep / 'n I woke up at about ten o' clock next morning / 'n they took me to be x- rayed again / because I was X-rayed when I got in when I was knocked out / 'n -em- they told me mum while I were there what'd happened to me and what bones I'd broke / 'n I 'ad to 'ave both me legs in plaster / I 'ad both the top parts of me legs in plaster / then / I went in for an operation on both the bottom parts of me legs / 'n I 'ad two metal plates... side (*indicating where*) / then got two screws and bolts through each of me knees / 'n I 'ad to 'ave both me legs hanging up (*laughter*) / 'n I weren't allowed to move them or anything / 'n then / about two weeks later / I 'ad to go in for another operation / 'n the doctor says that me ribs weren't healing up at all / 'n so I had to have three plastic joints in me ribs / 'n I come out / 'n I didn't wake up till the next day / ---'n --- 'n I weren't allowed to move at all / I were tied down 'cause I weren't allowed to move / 'n both me legs were hanging up (*laughter*) / 'n all I could do were move me neck and move me head round / 'n I 'ad to 'ave this nurse by me all the while / to get things for me / what I wanted 'n everything/ 'n I were in there for six month 'n after about four months all me plaster come off/ 'n I used to go into this swimming pool / this really warm swimming pool / 'n they used to do exercises wi' me in there / 'n I were allowed out after six months / one week / and three days / 'n I had ---a whole year and 'alf off school

PP: oooh

P : that ain't fair

T: what age were you Kerry when this happened?

K : seven

T: seven

P: have you still got plastic joints?

K : no

P : no Dean / they put 'em back in

T: you've got a question there from Graham

G : did you go in the paper?

K : no

G : no ! (*incredulous*)

T : have you still got those pins through your knees?

K : yes

A : yes / cause if someone kicks her it goes out of place don't it? / then it goes back again (*general talk*)

T: think what David just said : he said 'and she's such a good runner' / that's what I was thinking when you were talking about that / did you find-- did you start running as exercise o help your pulled muscles Kerry?

K : at the 'osp - at the hospital - we used to have this exercise room / and there were this running machine / and all the nurses were so surprised that I didn't get out of breath / and it just carried on from there

T: that's a wonderful story isn't it? (*general talk*)

D: my mate Darren C-- the idiot- when the doctor come up to him and put the--thing in his mouth / he ate it / he crunched it / didn't he ?

PP: the thermometer/the temperature/

D: yeah / Darren C-- the idiot (*general talk*)

T: any body got another question for Karen? / any more questions for Karen?  
very unusual story / isn't it ? which hospital were you in ? / was it a special one?



K: the royal / royal infirmary

P : that's where I went

Story No.24: \*'Casualty' (CASUALTY) by Karen  
T Unit Version

1. well I used to live in C-----
2. and me best mate Tracey W----
3. she were ever so tall
4. 'n this little kid ran by 'er
5. and kicked 'er
6. 'n she sort of beat 'im up
7. 'n she got expelled
8. 'n she were the only -like - mate - who I hung around with
9. 'n when she 'ad gone there was no one t'ang around with or anything
10. 'n I didn't talk t'anybody or anything
11. and I stopped doing me work
12. 'n I-I were ever so lonely
13. and so one night after school I'd just got done by me teacher
14. and there was a big lorry going by
15. 'n I just ran under it
16. 'n the lorry come right the way diagonally
17. crushed three of me ribs
18. snapped me pelvis
19. 'n broke both me legs
20. 'n broke one o' me arms
21. 'n all I can remember was me scream ringing in me ears
22. 'n then me head banging against the floor
23. 'n then next time I knew it I were in bed
24. 'n this woman were waking me up with all these comics
25. 'n me mam were by the side of me bed crying
26. 'n when I woke up I were all dizzy
27. 'n everything were turning round
28. 'n I could hardly 'ear
29. 'n 'ardly speak
30. 'n this doctor come up
31. and took me temperature
32. 'n that were too 'igh
33. 'n 'e took me 'eart beat
34. 'n that were goin' too fast
35. think it were about 'undred 'n seven 'e said
36. 'n it were about seven o' clock at night now
37. 'n 'e give me just a biscuit and a drink of orange
38. but I didn't 'ave a lot
39. 'n then I just fell to sleep
40. 'n I woke up at about ten o' clock next morning

41. 'n they took me to be x- rayed again because I was X-rayed when I got in when I was knocked out
42. 'n they told me mum while I were there what'd happened to me
43. and what bones I'd broke
44. 'n I 'ad to 'ave both me legs in plaster
45. I 'ad both the top parts of me legs in plaster
46. then I went in for an operation on both the bottom parts of me legs
47. 'n I 'ad two metal plates... side( indicating where)
48. then got two screws and bolts through each of me knees
49. 'n I 'ad to 'ave both me legs hanging up (laughter )
50. 'n I weren't allowed to move them or anything
51. 'n then about two weeks later I 'ad to go in for another operation
52. 'n the doctor says that me ribs weren't healing up at all
53. 'n so I had to have three plastic joints in me ribs
54. 'n I come out
55. 'n I didn't wake up till the next day
56. 'n I weren't allowed to move at all
57. I were tied down 'cause I weren't allowed to move
58. 'n both me legs were hanging up ( laughter )/
59. 'n all I could do were move me neck
60. and move me head round
61. 'n I 'ad to 'ave this nurse by me all the while to get things for me what I wanted 'n everything
62. 'n I were in there for six months
63. 'n after about four months all me plaster come off
64. 'n I used to go into this swimming pool this really warm swimming pool
65. 'n they used to do exercises wi' me in there
66. 'n I were allowed out after six months one week and three days
67. 'n I had a whole year and 'alf off school

Story No.26: \* 'Accidents ' (ACCIDENTS) by Shelley  
Raw transcript

S: I was down my friend's house / and Kathryn arrived / and we started playing Judo / 'n she says she'd trip me up / I didn't want to / but she got hold of me arm and she tripped me up and I landed on me wrist and it started to hurt- em- and we were going in to see my friend's mum / cause she was a nurse-er- when we met her dad and he said I'd live / so I went 'ome (*laughs*) and Kathryn were laughin' and I didn't know what to do, cry or laugh / (*laughs*) so I went home and my mum kept calling me a big baby and saying 'stop moaning'/ and about eleven o'clock at night / we got to the hospital and - em- we just sat there in this cubicle/ and I kept fainting / 'cause there was all these people / with drunken men with their heads cut open and there

PP. oooh

S: was this woman there and she were drunk and she'd got this little baby and she wouldn't let go of it and they were forcing all these pills and stuff down- in this tube- down her nose and so I had to shut the curtains round the cubicle / they couldn't see us

'cause I had shut the curtains and we were there until about midnight 'cause they couldn't find me anywhere

PP: (*laughter*)

S: and I got it plastered and I went home / and I'd just had that out of plaster/ and I were riding at me auntie's farm/ and -erm- I rode this little shetland pony called 'Rubbish'

PP: (*laughter*)

S: and it threw me off and it felt as if me arm had gone down t'ole / could still feel me arm there / I could feel it hanging down / when me auntie picked it up I thought it had fell off /and- er- mum says they could just fix - put it back in place

PP: (*laughter*)

S: and I went to hospital and she said she wouldn't do it/ so we 'ad to go all the way to --- -/ 'n then these ambulance men get me on this trolley/ and I couldn't get up there / 'n that's all I could remember until they came out / and they were just about to take me in for the operation / and they were just about to give me the injection / and my mum came rushing in and says 'oooh she's had bronchitis' / so they had to stop it and I had to have a tourniquet just here (*showing place on ther upper arm*)/ and I had to have freezing stuff to freeze me arm / and then I can remember me arm being stretched / thinking 'oh it's going to snap in a minute'/

PP: Eugh!

S: it'd been stretched so far / and then / when they put it in a sling/ they didn't plaster it to begin with / just put it in this thing at the wrist and-em- it didn't hurt no more / and the doctor kept saying 'oh it's all right her can go to school and everything now' / and the doctor kept saying 'no its gonna hurt you soon' / so I went home and I went to bed and in the middle of the -well- in the middle of the morning / I woke up and it was really hurting and I 'ad to have all these cushions and everything to tuck under me and it started to get better and I just had to lie on the settee 'cause I couldn't move 'cause it hurt every time I moved / and when I finally could move it / I looked under and I'd got big bruises all down me arm where they'd pulled the bone out /

PP: (*sympathetic noises*)

S :my little cousin come in and seen the bruises and she was sick all over my mum's new carpet (*she laughs; class join in*) / 'n- em- I had to give up me band/ 'cause I couldn't hold me trumpet up properly/ and then I can't do Games or P.E./

Analysis ( Chapter Nine) carried out only up to this point.

then one day I was rushing to go to the hospital / it were about eleven o' clock and my appointment was at five minutes past eleven and I were running downstairs and I tripped up and fell on me spine and my arm as well / to start with all I could feel was pain in the elbow / then we went and the doctor said I hadn't broke anything and then when I got home me spine started to hurt and it was sticking right out- em -so we went/ I came back to my house because I didn't want to go to the hospital again (*inaudible; audience getting restless*). I kept saying 'oh it's allright/ it's allright' /and then one night I fell out o' bed and I landed on me spine and it stuck out even further so I went to the doctor's instead and he said I'd dislocated the bottom of it further

P (James) sit down (*speaking gently*)

T: did you have it put back in place ? or just mended itself?

P : (Keeley) its still like it

T: Do you still have to go to the hospital a lot ?

S: Yes once every four months.

T: Shelley does it feel much better now ?

(*inaudible exchange*)

S : Nothing does

P: (Karen) She's never done games or P.E. at this school

(*General talk: David keeps asking for Kerry to tell her story again..*)

P. (Jonathan): all these accidents started because of you (*to Keeley*)

P: (Keeley) well that weren't my fault, that she couldn't land properly.

T: does it hurt you all the time?

S: what?

T: Your arm.

S: Yes.

T: What about your back?

S: That hurts when I lean against anything and sitting down like this.

T: And they can't do anything about it?

S: I can have an operation on me spine but it'll be a big operation and I don't want another one.

T: Wait till you're older or something. *(Shelley begins to tell about yet another accident; Keeley getting very uncomfortable; James talks gently and sympathetically to Shelley).*

Story No.26: \* 'Accidents ' (ACCIDENTS) by Shelley  
T Unit version

1. I was down my friend's house
2. and Kathryn arrived
3. and we started playing Judo
4. 'n she says she'd trip me up
5. I didn't want to
6. but she got hold of me arm
7. and she tripped me up
8. and I landed on me wrist
9. and it started to hurt
10. and we were going in to see my friend's mum 'cause she was a nurse when we met her dad
11. and he said I'd live
12. so I went 'ome *(laughs)*
13. and Kathryn were laughin'
14. and I didn't know what to do, cry or laugh *(laughs)*
15. so I went home
16. and my mum kept calling me a big baby and saying 'stop moaning '
17. and about eleven o'clock at night we got to the hospital
18. and we just sat there in this cubicle
19. and I kept fainting 'cause there was all these people with drunken men with their heads cut open
20. and there was this woman there
21. and she were drunk
22. and she'd got this little baby
23. and she wouldn't let go of it
24. and they were forcing all these pills and stuff down- in this tube- down her nose
25. and so I had to shut the curtains round the cubicle
26. they couldn't see us 'cause I had shut the curtains
27. and we were there until about midnight 'cause they couldn't find me anywhere
28. and I got it plastered
29. and I went home
30. and I'd just had that out of plaster
31. and I were riding at me auntie's farm
32. and erm- I rode this little shetland pony called 'Rubbish' *(laughter)*
33. and it threw me off
34. and it felt as if me arm had gone down t'ole

35. could still feel me arm there
36. I could feel it hanging down
37. when me auntie picked it up I thought it had fell off
38. and mum says they could just put it back in place (*laughter*)
39. and I went to A--- hospital
40. and she said she wouldn't do it
41. so we 'ad to go all the way to B---
42. 'n then these ambulance men get me on this trolley
43. and I couldn't get up there
44. 'n that's all I could remember until they came out
45. and they were just about to take me in for the operation
46. and they were just about to give me the injection
47. and my mum came rushing in
48. and says 'oooh she's had bronchitis'
49. so they had to stop it
50. and I had to have a tourniquet just here ( *showing place on her upper arm* ).
51. and I had to have freezing stuff to freeze me arm
52. and then I can remember me arm being stretched thinking 'oh it's going to snap in a minute' it'd been stretched so far
53. and then when they put it in a sling they didn't plaster it to begin with
54. just put it in this thing at the wrist
55. and-em- it didn't hurt no more
56. and the doctor kept saying ' oh it's all right her can go to school and everything now '
57. and the doctor kept saying 'no its gonna hurt you soon'
58. so I went home
59. and I went to bed
60. and in the middle of the morning I woke up
61. and it was really hurting
62. and I 'ad to have all these cushions and everything to tuck under me
63. and it started to get better
64. and I just had to lie on the settee 'cause I couldn't move 'cause it hurt every time I moved
65. and when I finally could move it I looked under
66. and I'd got big bruises all down me arm where they'd pulled the bone out
67. my little cousin come in
68. and seen the bruises
69. and she was sick all over my mum's new carpet
70. I had to give up me band 'cause I couldn't hold me trumpet up properly
71. and then I can't do Games or P.E.

Story No.28: \* Grandad's Return (RETURN) by Sarah  
T Unit Version

1. this is a true story
2. and it happened to my dad a long time ago and his sister Madge
3. they were playing outside when me grandma was goin' down to the shops

4. so she asked 'em if they wanted to go with 'er
5. but they didn't
6. so they just went upstairs
7. and started to play hide 'n seek
8. about five minutes later after me grandma'd gone me grandad came
9. but they didn't expect him till the year had ended 'cause he was meant to be at the navy like he was for the past couple o' years
10. so he hung his coat up
11. and went upstairs quickly
12. and they came running to him with their arms out
13. and he says 'get dressed quickly and I'll tell you what happened in the navy'
14. so they got dressed
15. and they quickly ran downstairs
16. and as they were just goin' to sit down and me grandad were just goin' to tell them about the navy they heard this big bang
17. so he told my dad and his sister Madge to stay down stairs while he went to have a look to see what the bang was
18. he went in his and me grandma's room
19. and nothing was on the floor or anything
20. the same in the bath room
21. same in the toilet
22. then he went into me Auntie Madge's room and me dad's where he saw the roof had caved in where they would have been lying
23. luckily they was downstairs waiting to hear what happened in the navy

### Story No.28: \* Grandad's Return (RETURN) by Sarah

#### Grandad's Version (recorded at home by Sarah)

1. this is about Sarah's dad from his dad
2. that right? *(to Sarah)*
3. came 'ome from work
4. he was sitting up for me one night
5. 'n I'd just come home from work
6. 'n I'd been in the 'ouse about five minutes
7. and the two children are there- Marilyn and Michael-
8. and all of a sudden we heard a big bang
9. and we went upstairs
10. and there was the ceiling dropped right across their bed
11. if they hadn'ta waited for me coming home from work they would've both been killed
12. 'cause the ceiling had dropped right across their beds
13. and we just happened to catch them in time
14. and that is a very dangerous time

#### Grandma's Version

1. I kept Michael and his sister Marilyn up one night after their normal bedtime because

- their father was coming home
2. and just as he got in the ceiling in their bedroom fell down
  3. and as it was an old cottage the plaster was at least two inches thick
  4. and it all fell in the cot and the single bed where they would have been sleeping
  5. and it would have been a terrible thing for them both

### 3. The Private Stories told and written by Emma.

(1) Transcript: 'E.T.Returns (1)'

Nov./Dec.1982

#### Episode 1.

1. we were riding along the road
2. and it was getting dark up near the road where they lived
3. and all of a sudden there was a big white thing jumped in the middle of the road
4. and rolled over
5. they looked
6. but there was nothing there
7. they thought it was a ghost
8. they didn't know
9. all sudden there was some glow in the bushes
10. and a big round thing in the middle of the field
11. they didn't know what it were
12. the rolled their (---unclear) backwards and forwards
13. and all at once something jumped on the car and jumping up and down
14. it was an E.T.
15. 'quick get it off'
16. she screamed like mad
17. and ran a mile
18. she got some help from some friends
19. they come too with loads o' guns
20. they shot
21. he jogged them
22. and lined them up
23. and put them in cages drying and drooping
24. there was one small one what they could 'member
25. 'it's E.T.'
26. they quickly covered him
27. and ran off with him
28. and put him in the closet in the house when they got back
29. 'how did you get here E.T.?'
30. 'I don't know
31. but I'll have to be going soon'
32. it was a very weary night
33. there'd been lots of tales about ghosts



Episode 2.

34. it was autumn now time for the harvest
35. Eliot went with his dad on the harvest in his lorry
36. 'come on dad take ( *unclear*)'
37. and took his sister too
38. they went in the harvest
39. on the way back there was a white thing standing in the road
40. they didn't know what it were
41. they looked under
42. there were nothing there
43. perhaps it had rolled in the brook
44. they went
45. and took a short cut through the cemetery when they got in to go to the mates house
46. and tell 'em about it
47. and a big spider creeped out the grave
48. and chased them
49. they're running mad
50. 'help! help!'
51. the spider had big beastin' eyes
52. and it caught E.T.
53. and started to attack him
54. 'we must get him back'
55. E.T. was struggling like mad
56. spider piercing holes in his skin
57. quickly someone jumped out
58. and said 'here boy come back'
59. and clapped their hands
60. all at once the spider went running back to the man
61. 'you silly boy what you doin' 'tacking that--thing?'
62. 'I like your little friend' (*ingratiating voice*)
63. E.T. got up
64. and went 'nyah,nyah'
65. and spat at him
66. 'you little brat'
67. he started to chase him with his walking stick
68. and started to run once again
69. and all at once a grave opened
70. and dropped in it
71. we couldn't get out
72. for ages and ages they were stuck in the grave
73. 'we're supposed to be got back by eight o'clock
74. now look'
75. eventually did get out the grave
76. lots of spears and caves
77. they had a good time
78. and come out to this place like a beach
79. it had lots o' diamonds
80. they went swimming there

81. and played games
82. and got some diamonds
83. they stayed there for a few days
84. then they went back to their mum
85. 'where've you been?'
86. 'oh nowhere
87. went to tell the friends about the ghost'
88. 'stop mucking around'
89. they looked very hideous like they'd seen a ghost
90. they didn't mind ghosts *very* much

### Episode 3.

91. night came
92. there was a big sheet in the bedroom what they had just sat
93. all at once the sheet rose when they were in bed
94. and started attacking it/ E.T. again
95. they pulled the sheet off
96. and there it was
97. it was only the dad mucking around
98. he yelled at the E.T.
99. and E.T. ran like mad to one corner
100. and hid
101. 'It's all right
102. come out little man
103. come out
104. I'm not going to harm you
105. I am your friend' (*'insincere' tone of voice*)
106. once again he started yelling
107. E.T. did not like it
108. 'come here!'
109. he grabbed him
110. and took him downstairs
111. 'look what I've found in the room an E.T. thing the (P) etcetera.
112. 'out of here get that thing out'

### Episode 4.

113. time passed
114. E.T. did get praised
115. and eventually did make friends
116. soon it was time for him to go home
117. 'goodbye E.T. I hope to see you again'
118. then the space ship took off
119. and he (P) went
120. it was sad times now
121. E.T. had leave
122. E.T. was very happy on earth
123. he had to go though because his parents would miss him

124. and he would miss them  
125. he had enjoyed it very much on earth  
126. Eliot stood forward and gave him a diamond  
127. just then his sister...

*(Steven R. opens the door)*

S: E.T. phone home E.T. phone home.

A: Oh Steve!

*(Tape recorder switched off, then on again)*

#### Episode 5.

128. the children went home  
129. and got on to their bikes  
130. and went riding  
131. just then some man came out the hedges  
132. and started chasing them  
133. E.T. rose his finger  
134. and flew  
135. the man was there  
136. he seen them flying  
137. he was the only one who seen him  
138. he rose his finger  
139. and flew through the air over the trees  
140. eventually landed in the forest *(FX: noise of things falling)*  
141. all the baskets tumbling  
142. and turning over  
143. 'ouch'  
144. 'are you all right?'  
145. 'Yes I am allright'  
146. you could hear the bushes and trees clambering against each other  
*(FX: trees swishing in the wind)*  
147. 'come on  
148. 's getting windy'

#### Episode 6.

149. meanwhile -back in- back in the office *(FX: knocking)*  
150. 'come in'  
151. 'boss, I seen him again  
152. he took off  
153. I seen him once  
154. but never caught him  
155. but I'll try again'  
156. he went out  
157. just again he seen him  
158. he got a gun  
159. and shot him

160. they was a bird behind him  
161. and he shot the bird (*FX: bang*)

#### Episode 7.

162. just then E.T. was still riding backwards and forwards  
163. eventually he found a hiding place the best hiding place you've ever had  
164. he really enjoyed it  
165. lots of fruit and stuff to chew at  
166. and there was a little shop on the corner  
167. he sneaked in  
168. and pinched all his chips and chocolate  
169. 'ah who are you?' said the shopkeeper  
170. he called his wife 'Ma come here darling  
171. there's something in here'  
172. just then he shot out  
173. 'you stupid idiot  
174. don't let a (*inaudible*) like that'  
175. putting down some box  
176. 'sorry'  
177. the doors- all the windows were shaking in the wind (*FX: noise of windows shaking*)  
and the wind started to blow (*FX: wind blowing*)  
178. 'it's getting windy  
179. we must get out o' here said (*inaudible*)

#### Episode 8

180. it was next day now  
181. the wind was gone  
182. and all was quiet  
183. days went by and by again  
184. soon it was time for E.T. to go  
185. it's a sad time again  
186. goodbye E.T.  
187. 'I might never see you again'  
188. "I will come again one day"  
189. 'I never ever see you again  
190. I'm sure I never see you again  
191. he kissed and said 'be good'  
192. and all at once up in the the little doorway of the space ship the dog ran up after  
him barking its head off  
193. and all at once it took off  
194. the end

#### (2) Transcript: 'E.T. News'

Nov./Dec. 1982

1. 'this man could be dangerous
2. and all children shouldn't be  
let out the streets at night

3. that's all the news' (*FX: T.V. News signature tune; coughing*)
4. 'stop coughing Eliot
5. it's most revolting
6. here's a tissue' (*FX: nose blowing*)
7. 'oh thanks'
8. meanwhile they were talking
9. 'that's E.T.
10. didn't you see it?
11. didn't you see it?' (*FX: radio time signal*)
12. 'and into new year's for newsflash'
13. 'hey quick mum's got the radio on'
14. 'there's a man on the streets
15. and he could be dangerous
16. he's say- saying but there's an alien
17. he must be in- he's in America somewhere
18. or at least he was
19. we don't know where he's gone
20. he could be back to his own planet 'bye (*FX: nose blowing*)
21. they switched off the radio (*FX: switching off radio*)
22. 'oh no it's E.T.'
23. meanwhile on the planet there was fighting
24. the boss ended up with bruise on his head
25. and little skinny person was still fighting
26. and all at once a big dagger come
27. and the heart of the man and the heart of his sir was once no more
28. quickly E.T. ran back on the ship
29. and went back with the men
30. and made them all better
31. he can make them better easy with his finger
32. 'now you can go back to your own planet'
33. they went back
34. and put in jail after a few weeks (*FX: T.V. news signature tune sung*)
35. 'welcome back to the news
36. the men who have been getting fuel covers on have been back on the ship
37. the battle between Argentina and the nuclear bombs
38. the nuclear bombs have been protest about'

(3) Transcript: 'E.T.Returns (2)'

Nov./Dec.1982

Episode 1.(a)

1. it was years by now since E.T. had last come
2. till one day Eliot was thinking
3. and all of a sudden seen a light in the sky
4. and when it was time for bed the light grew bigger and bigger
5. eventually there was a big red light on the ground
6. he jumped out of bed
7. and he saw the most strangest wonderful thing you've ever seen
8. he looked again

9. it wasn't
10. it was E.T.
11. he was back
12. quickly he rushed
13. and got his night (P) coat on
14. and ran out side
15. 'E.T. you're back'

Episode 1 (b)

16. it was years by now since E.T. last come
17. Eliot and his sister were in bed
18. one night the light- he seen a light in the sky
19. it grew bigger and bigger
20. eventually it landed
21. he quickly jumped out of bed
22. and went over to it at the window
23. 'it's E.T.
24. he's back' said Eliot
25. he's grabbed his sister
26. and she jumped up
27. and had a look
28. it was
29. it's E.T.
30. he was back
31. quickly they ran
32. and got on the dressing downs (*sic*)
33. and went outside
34. 'hello E.T. its nice to see you back'
35. 'hello it's nice to see you back' said E.T.
36. meanwhile as they seen E.T.
37. and talking to him
38. lots o' strange things happened
39. a load of plants come off the ship
40. you can remember them from the last voyage when E.T.came
41. E.T. was very nice and happy now
42. he was better at speakin' English
43. he wasn't very good at it last time
44. he had been taking English exams
45. at last it was time for the space ship to take off
46. it took off
47. once again E.T. was alone
48. he was alone stranded three thousand million miles from home
49. but he didn't mind this time because he'd come to stay for a few weeks  
till it was time for the spaceship to return
50. and take him back to his own planet

### Episode 1 ( c )

51. it was years by now since E.T.last come
52. till one night Eliot was lying in bed
53. and all of a sudden was a light in the sky
54. quickly he jumped out of bed and went over
55. it quickly landed
56. it was E.T.
57. 'he's back'
58. his sister went over to the window (P)
59. 'yes I am very tired'
60. 'I know where you can sleep' said Eliot
61. 'in my sister's bed'
62. 'yes thank you'
63. 'oh no and where'm I going to sleep?'
64. 'you can sleep in the extra room'
65. 'allright'
66. she went into extra room taking all the toys and all that lot
67. she left the teddy 'cause E.T.wanted it
68. 'I like teddies' said E.T.
69. 'I don't know what they really are
70. I've never seen one before' said E.T.
71. meanwhile she was making her bed
72. and she shouted 'ah there's a spider'
73. ' get in bed'
74. 'allright mum good night'
75. they went to bed

### Episode 2.

76. morning came
77. 'come on children
78. time to get up"
79. they got up
80. and stuffed E.T. in the closet
81. then they went down for their breakfast
82. 'mum mum' said Eliot
83. 'can we go on a short bike ride?'
84. 'yes you may and don't be long'
85. 'yes' she said
86. she packed some lettuce and some tomato sandwiches up
87. Eliot crept upstairs to get E.T. and wrap him up in some towels and bring him on the ship
88. 'come on E.T.
89. you can come too
90. we're coming to do some special exploring with you'
91. they got E.T. in the basket
92. then rode off
93. just then her bike exploded

94. the sister's B.M.X. tyres burst  
 95. 'oh no my tyre's exploded  
 96. ah I don't know what to do now'  
 97. 'you'll have to get in here  
 98. oh no there isn't enough room  
 99. you'll have to walk it'  
 100. just then E.T. kindly jumped out of the basket put sister there  
 101. and then sister clutched hold of E.T.  
 102. then they took off  
 103. the bike went very fast through the sky  
 104. and at last it landed with a bang and a clatter  
 105. they went over head and heels  
 106. just then out of the woods comed some men  
 107. they quickly scrambled on to the B.M.X. again  
 108. and rode away  
 109. they were coming ganging up on them  
 110. there was a big army lorry there  
 111. and they went straight for it  
 112. just then E.T. looked  
 113. the bike took off again  
 114. and then they seen a spaceship a very strange one  
 115. it was at the space station  
 116. the quickly scrambled on to it  
 117. and it took off through the atmosphere  
 118. finally went into space deep deep space (*FX: sound of space ship taking off*)

### Episode 3.

119. E.T.was sleeping  
 120. they were all sleeping  
 121. they didn't notice some men on the ship with funny clothes on  
 122. they had guns  
 123. and were fighting  
 124. E.T. was very scared  
 125. he got (P) off the ship  
 126. and it landed again  
 127. the ship was very very (P) rocking around  
 128. they (*laughs*) got on to the planet  
 129. and Eliot and E.T. were all ready  
 130. the planet was sand sand nothing but sand  
 131. it was very tricky  
 132. the sand was up to your neck  
 133. 'n there was a big sand storm  
 134. meanwhile on the other side some men coming  
 135. they quickly trotskied off to the other side  
 136. 'oh no don't know what we're gonna do' said E.T.  
 137. nothing at all in fact  
 138. 'we'll have to get back somehow'



#### Episode 4.

139. just then the ship was there
140. they quickly scrambled on it and got back to home
141. they didn't notice E.T.'s parents were there on the earth to say goodbye and let  
the two sisters off
142. finally it was time for E.T. to go
143. they kissed them each
144. and said goodbye
145. the men stopped chasing them
146. and stopped (P) dead
147. they all waved goodbye
148. and E.T. took off
149. this is the end of the story

#### (4) Transcript : Virus Hit School

September 20th, 1983

#### Episode 1.

1. it was Monday morning
2. and all the kids went into school
3. and hung up their coats
4. they went straight into classrooms
5. everyone was reading their book
6. so I got out mine
7. and started to read too
8. then my teacher come in
9. 'all right then kids, I'll have you into the Drama Studio'
10. so they went into the Drama Studio listen to today's play
11. today's play was all about chemicals
12. and in the play was Steven R. Ann-Marie C. Dean J. Louise H. Gaynor P. and some  
other kids
13. first of all they had Dean J--- coming  
on stage as a professor
14. 'this is a very dangerous chemical
15. this can kill
16. let me take the top off
17. and you can see why'
18. he took the top off
19. and all this dangerous fumes and smoke come out
20. and then he took a deep breath
21. and dropped it
22. then he just fainted
23. a few minutes later he woke up behind the stage
24. he said 'what's happened?' to Ann-Marie C.
25. 'its all right
26. you've dropped the chemical
27. are you all right?'

28. 'yes I am all right'

#### Episode 2.

29. later on we were in the classroom
30. it was Maths
31. Dean J. began to feel weary again
32. took him up to the sick room
33. 'I'm all right' (*protesting tone*)
34. laying in bed
35. he was sick
36. then later on the nurse went out to tend to some children with nosebleeds
37. all at once he lost his hair
38. turned green
39. and horrible yellow teeth hanged down at each side of his mouth
40. and his nails slashed the covers as he got out
41. and went in
42. in one of the little rooms at the side was a lady
43. she was typing
44. he ripped open the door
45. and she screamed as he leapt up
46. and bit her on the neck
47. she looked very weary

#### Episode 3.

48. that night she's sitting in her house
49. she said 'I fell asleep while I was typing today at school
50. I had a dream about this thing come and bit me on the neck'
51. the man started laughing saying 'never mind about your dreams
52. come on
53. you must go to bed
54. you've got a hard day ahead of you tomorrow at school'
55. so she went bed
56. and got up

#### Episode 4.

57. at school next day she was sick
58. and got told to go into the sick room
59. and go in bed too by the school nurse
60. she lay in bed
61. and all at once she had loss of hair
62. turned green
63. and yellow teeth 'peared at each side of her mouth
63. she ripped her nails through the covers as she got out
64. and this time she went into an office at the side where Mr. G. was doing a play about swords
65. luckily he had a sword with him

66. and when Dean J. the other vampire come with him was started to enclose on him  
67. then he got out his sword  
68. and whack he slashed one of the hands  
69. but it didn't seem to bleed  
70. he stuck the sword in one of the heads  
71. but it didn't seem to be nothing  
72. just looked like something been pickled in blue dye.  
73. it snatched a sword out of his hand  
74. each of them took hold of his arms  
75. and slashed the sword  
76. and bit him on the neck  
77. he got dressed very quickly

#### Episode 5.

78. in dinner he began to feel very weary  
79. and he was sick  
80. everyone started to go 'eugh' as the fumes of the sick went over all the rest of (P)  
81. some other people started to feel ill too  
82. the nurses come in  
83. and took him into the sickroom  
84. same thing happened again  
85. he turned green loss of hair two yellow teeth growing at each side of the mouth  
86. he slashed the covers as he got out of the bed  
87. this time the covers were like ribbons

#### Episode 6.

88. he was walking along  
89. in one of the classrooms was Mr. P.  
90. he was trying out the chemicals  
91. the monster walked in  
92. and began to choke him  
93. when he had choked it bit him on the neck  
94. and then he began to feel weary  
95. he just sat in the office all day without no one knowing  
96. then he was sick  
97. then the nurses come in  
98. and took him into the sickroom  
99. he lay in bed  
100. and then the same thing happened to him loss of hair and two yellow teeth hanging  
either side of his mouth  
101. his claws slashed the covers  
102. there was nothing left of the covers by now  
103. as he walked now there was four of them on the go

### Episode 7.

104. Mrs. M--- started running around bolting all the doors  
105. and all the kids were wondering 'what's going on?'  
106. all the windows were bolted from the outside  
107. all the kids 'gan to worry  
108. 'will we ever get home tonight?'  
109. 'we haven't done no work all day'  
110. 'is it the end o' term?'  
111. Mrs. M. started to look in all the faces  
112. 'what's up, Mrs. M.  
113. 'what've we done wrong?'  
114. 'you can't go home tonight kids  
115. you'll have to stay in school  
116. we'll have to get you some clothes in and bedding'  
117. later on these helicopters come  
118. and opened one of the skylights in the roof  
119. and clothes and bedding was shifted through

### Episode 8.

120. they separated one of the rooms into a girls' room and a boys' room  
121. and they tried to make it a bit home-looking  
122. they wrote letters to their mum telling what they wanted that they weren't coming home  
123. they pretend to say they were having a competition in school 'bout camping and what they would like  
124. I choosed a television and a few toys  
125. Louise choosed her teddy bear, her MouseTrap and Ludo  
126. Sandra L--- she's sweets and her dollies  
127. and she wanted her sister to come  
128. but she wouldn't be allowed  
129. she wanted her mum too  
130. Steven R. choosed his drum set and his cassette player  
131. everyone choosed the different toys  
132. some other girls choosed their perfume and fashionable clothes and pictures to hang on the walls  
133. I got one or two pictures hang on the walls  
134. soon it looked ever so nice  
135. had curtains on the windows  
136. and had nice bright toys everywhere  
137. and the bedroom looked ever so nice  
138. all the pictures and blackboards were removed  
139. one half was the playroom  
140. another half was the bedroom  
141. it was very nice and colourful  
142. in the boys' bedroom had all model air-planes and all posters of war  
143. that looked quite good for the boys but it was (P)  
144. had nice coloured bedspreads

145. and it had robots and Scalextric all over the floor
146. the clothes messed it up
147. as for the girls' bedroom that was much better
148. in their area that was made into a sitting room they had big boards closing over to stop them from going into the other room
149. in the classroom which wasn't a classroom the other room it was made into a teachers' bedroom
150. they slept in the same room as the boys
151. I don't know why
152. they had wine bottles and crisp packets everywhere where'd been eating and in the foyer
153. that was made into a tea room and bath room too
154. and in the room next to it that was made into a toilet too the boys' toilets the girls' toilets and the staff toilets
155. they had a little room which was a tea room
156. in the bedrooms they had put little tables
157. they didn't have to work

#### Episode 9

158. by this time one of the people Mrs.C. had found the disease to stop the monsters
159. the monsters started to rip all the doors down in the house which was the classroom really where they had the bedrooms
160. they did a hissing noise that went 'hiss hiss hiss'
161. everyone started to scream
162. Mrs. C. got the chemical
163. and put it over them at once
164. Mr.G. by now never had nothing on
165. so when he changed he was wrapped in clothes
166. he got some clothes ready
167. and everything back to normal
168. and everyone went home
169. the end

(5) Written story

Billy & the Rocks

October 5th, 1983

( Written by Emma after reading a basal reader with her remedial teacher; spelling & punctuation have been conventionalised.

It was very hot and Billy was on the beach with Anna and Patch the dog. They went to the beach a lot in summer. In winter it was wild but in summer the sea was very calm. On the beach, the tide was out and he could see the big rock. He loved climbing rocks.

"Come on" said Billy, "I want to climb the big rock".

Anna said," No--and you cannot take Patch."

"Goodbye," said Billy and ran to the big rock.

When he got to it, it was very big. He started to climb it. It took a long time. When he reached the top, he could see his sister and his dog and his village and the sea and the sea all around the rock.

"What a lovely sight"

Just when he said that, he realised that he was cut off from land.

It was getting very cold. He fell asleep.

In the night, he had a fright. The tide was coming in. He had to stand up till morning. It went out a bit. He was very hungry

"I want to go home. I will have to stay here for the rest of my life".

He missed his mum, dad, sister and Patch the dog.

"I want to go home but I can't"

The sun was shining. He had some fish that was not cooked; it was rotten.

In the distance he seen a boat; it was a fishing boat. It was dark when it reached the rock on Willkilly. The sea was coming in. When the boat come in, they threw some rope up and the boy came down and he was happy.

When he was on the boat he had a good meal and some hot chocolate and went to bed.

In the morning he got woke up by a bang. It was a flare.

Someone was in trouble; it was us, we were sinking. The boat had a hole in it. I got some breakfast and went on deck. It was bad. The boat was sinking fast

' Now we will have a painful death.'

' No we can't', said Billy.

' You are right', said one of the men.' There must be one way we can get out.'

' Swim ', said Billy.

' Yes, but I can't swim', said one of the men.

' I can', said another.

So the men who could swim held the men who couldn't swim. It was hard to swim in the water. The boat sank.

Something was there. It was a dog, their dog.

' We must go back for the dog'.

So Billy started to swim back. He got the dog. He was very tired. He couldn't swim. The dog could swim alright; it hung on to him and helped him to swim back to safety.

He was on land, his mum and dad were there and Anna and Patch the dog.

He went home and had a bath and went to bed.

(6) Transcript: 'The Snare ( See pp.229 and 370a) 7th. October, 1983

(7) Transcript: 'The Whale' (See p. 203) 7th.October, 1983

(8) Raw Transcript: 'Martin the Stowaway Mouse'    23rd. November 1983

[This is the ending of a story which remained on tape after Emma had recorded The Mouse in the Maze over it.]

...the cats were jumping in the water and thrashing(?) their claws / he was going towards it / he quickly picked up a twig and pushed himself away / zoom /the soil what was on the banks of the river started to change to sand /there was a big opening at the bottom and he sailed out / he had to stop on an island / outside was a little island / he got some food and put it aboard / and some leaves to sleep in /

on the journey across the seas / he met many different things / he met a famous mouse who liked reading and writing / a mouse which could swim for miles / he bumped into a few cats but he had a quick getaway / soon Martin ended up in Cornwall / he didn't know what he was doing there / this is strange he said / I can't believe it / I was in America / ate some food / woke up / now in Cornwall /

in Cornwall there were some cars on the car park and some people packing away tents / Martin climbed into one of the cars after it'd been packed up / it started to move / then it moved down the road and on the motorway and back / it happened to break down near the place where he noticed across the road was a- across the motorway he managed to make out a little dot / that must be a hut / he went over to the hut / hey / haven't I seen this place before? said Martin / then he seen a mouse with loads of babies come running out / it was Vicky and his children/ Well?

(9) Transcript: 'The Mouse in the Maze'  
      T Unit Version

23rd November, 1983.

Episode 1.

1. 'round this side Mick'
2. 'allright Michael
3. don't lose your head'
4. they ran with the nets
5. Edward was very unlucky to escape
6. the net come over his head
7. 'hey up Martin we've caught this one'
8. 'Mick' said Michael 'we've got one
9. well, as we can't find any more this one will do
10. come on
11. give me this box'

12. they put on a pair of gloves
13. and picked up poor Edward
14. Edward got threw into a box
15. and started to go along in the car
16. when he got to (P) wherever he was going all these strange hands come down with gloves
17. and shoved him into a cage
18. the cage was locked
19. 'well then come on Michael
20. 'stake it in to the professor'
21. the professor come out
22. 'oh you have my mouse
23. did you only get one?'
24. 'yes I'm sorry about that'
25. 'well you could have got more than that'
26. they went off in disgust
27. 'no pay for you this week' said the professor
28. he went in to Nicola
29. Nicola was one of his people who helped him
30. 'Nicola' he said 'come over here
31. shall we put this mouse into the maze?'
32. 'I don't know' she said
33. 'it is quite a big one
34. isn't it?'
35. 'oh yes we shall put the mouse into the maze'
36. they put the mouse into the maze

## Episode 2.

37. Edward was very scared
38. he went to one corner (*inaudible*) bang
39. sheet of glass come flying down
40. he run in the other end
41. a load of water tipped over his head
42. then he started having funny tingling prickly feelings through his feet
43. and then there was a cat chasing him
44. the cat started to chase him
45. he got to the far corner
46. and a sheet of glass come
47. he was safe from the cat
48. but just then in front of him the razor blades flicked up
49. but luckily there was a little door way
50. he ran through the doorway
51. and the paw flashed just missing him
52. it scratched the maze
53. he ran under the cat's legs
54. the cat started to jump
55. there were some steps leading up the maze



56. he managed to run up
57. the cat got stuck half way
58. he couldn't go up
59. and at the top he sees food
60. he went across to the food
61. and he just managed to get a few nibbles
62. and a big glass partition came down
63. and some water got squirted at the poor mouse

### Episode 3

64. Edward was very scared
65. then he heard a scratching sound
66. he was only a spider
67. Edward ran up to spider
68. 'what is your name?' he asked the spider
69. 'can you speak English?'
70. the spider shook its head
71. 'please I do not want to tell you my name'
72. the spider soon told its name
73. he was Binson
74. 'can you help us to get out of here?'
75. quick there's a cat coming
76. we must run quick' he said to Binson
77. 'climb on my back'
78. but Binson had an idea
79. the cat was just approaching
80. and Binson spun a web
81. and the cat got tangled up
82. he climbed on to Edward's back
83. and started to (walk) run
84. there was another glass partition and another one at the other side
85. and there was only one door left this time
86. they had to make a dive
87. he dived through the door
88. and then there was some more food
89. Binson managed to get to the food before anyone else
90. 'quick' said Edward 'the glass is going to get put down in a minute'
91. he pulled Binson away
92. and the glass came down just missing his little feet
93. soon he saw an opening
94. he ran so fast
95. but he came flying down the other end
96. 'we're falling'
97. Binson quickly spun a web
98. and the mouse snapped it
99. 'it is no good'
100. he managed to swing across the other side and make a little (P) trampette
101. so when the mouse fell he bounced straight back up again

T. What did he make? A little trampette? Oh!  
 E. Yes, a sort of bouncy thing for him to land on.  
 T. With the spider's web?  
 102. near the bottom he seen a little hole well a crack  
 103. he climbed through the crack  
 104. and he was free  
 105. 'thanks a lot' he said to Binson  
 106. 'you are very kind  
 107. I shall always come near you'  
 108. Binson just this minute Binson started to cry  
 109. 'what's up?' he said to Binson  
 110. 'I have no home'  
 111. 'well come on  
 112. 'you can start a new life with me'  
 113. the end

An example of the 'book-like' text of 'Mouse in the Maze', which Emma illustrated and could read (See Chapter Eleven, p. ).

'Round this side, Mick'.  
 'All right, Michael, don't lose your head.'  
 They ran with the nets. Edward couldn't escape; the net came over his head.  
 'Hey up, Martin. We've got one'.  
 'Mick', said Michael, 'we've got one. Well, as we can't find any more, this one will do.  
 Come on, give me that box.'  
 They put on a pair of gloves and picked up poor Edward.

Edward found himself thrown into a box and being driven along in a van. When the van stopped, all these strange hands reached down with gloves on and shoved him into a cage. The cage was locked.

(10) Raw Transcript: 'Orca'

5th. December, 1983.

(A re-telling of the film, 'Orca, the Great White Whale' which Emma said was based on a true story. The telling is long and, in the middle , becomes confused. I include the dramatic beginning and ending only.)

Orca the great whale / everyone said it was a whale called Orca / it sometimes come on the beach / some people never believed it / some people did

Episode 1.

an old fisherman down in Cornwall / in Cornwall the fisherman said/ 'there is such a thing as Orca / I seen him years ago/ he's a fine great whale is Orca/ he's got a mate /at least I

think so' / all the rest of the people started laughing and he bought them all a drink/ 'drink up' he said / they all started to drink /

one man come running in amazed/ 'quick something's in the water/it must be an octopus/' 'an octopus? Rubbish' he said / 'you don't get octopuses around here' / he quickly ran outside and looked down the pier and there / for his amazement / he saw--a great whale / 'it's Orca' he said / 'I can't believe it / after all those years I see it again / its Orca'

there was a whistle blow at the other side and there was the boats went in / 'quick get that whale' / they all ran in and got one of the whales /it wasn't Orca / at least I thought so / it was Orca's mate / they tied her up and pulled her in as the snares went in her /

there was a big fight for the next one / there was a lady standing on the boat/ a very young lady/ she had a bad leg / '(gentle voice) please don't kill that other whale/ you must leave it/ you already killed its mate' / ' (rougher voice) well / we can't just leave it / its in agony now' / he got a snare and she started to fight / they pushed her / she nearly went overboard /and lifted up the snare/ just as he was going to fight she managed to get up and knock it flying-knock him flying / and the snare went flying into the air/

T : Snare? (*here I pick up a previous discussion about the meaning of 'snare'*)

E : Oh no, harpoon

T : What do you mean by snare?

E : Harpoon I mean. Start again, start again.

T : No, it's alright..

#### Episode four

as she screamed she was left / they never knew what happened to the woman / did she survive? / is she still alive today? / or is she dead and under all the ice? / the end

( This is followed on the tape by a discussion about Anna's feelings towards animals. She said, 'I like animals. I want to be a vet when I grow up- a vet or a lorry driver').

#### 4. Michael's Personal Reading and Writings.

##### (1) Michael's personal Reading Record: 1982-4

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

Hans Solo at Star's End

The Monster Club

Flash Gordon:The Lion Men of Mongo

Jules Verne

Brian Daley

Ronald Chetwynd Hayes

Alex Raymond

The Black Hole	Alan Dean Foster
Hawk the Slayer	Terry Marcel
Galactic Warlord	Douglas Hill
Hardy Boys: While the Clock Ticked	Franklin W.Dixon
Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew Meet Dracula and other stories	Franklin W.Dixon
The Empire Strikes Back	Donald F. Glut
Moonraker	Ian Fleming
The Hardy Boys Mystery of the Desert Giant	Franklin W.Dixon
Fire Fox	Craig Thomas
* Tron	Brian Daley
* Star Trek II	
Worlds at War	Steven Caldwell
Fantastic Planet	Steven Caldwell
* Battleship Galactica	Glen A.Larson
* Wargames	Steven Bischoff
The Acorn Electron User Guide	
The Citadel of Chaos	Steve Jackson
Starship Traveller	Steve Jackson
Forest of Doom	Ian Livingstone
City of Thieves	Ian Livingstone
Watership Down	Richard Adams
* Krull	Alan Dean Foster
Start Programming with the Electron	M.S.
The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole	Sue Townsend
Dungeons and Dragons	T.S.R.Hobbies
Basic Rules	

(\*Book and Film).

(1) Ribs' Runners ( copy of hand-written text) 25th September, 1983

As the helicopter patrolled past the window the sound of rotor blades woke me up.

'S--', I inquired.

'Yeah?' he replied.

'You awake?' I asked. ' I'm having trouble sleeping.'

'Yeah! Me too'. He stopped for a minute. 'Has the chopper been round here yet?'

'Fraid so. It might still be monitoring us!'

The helicopter was a 'Blue Thunder', the only one of its kind. It could 'listen in' on different conversations through a unique bugging device. It also had heat sensors so it could detect a man crawling through undergrowth. The searchlight it carried was 30,000,000 candlepower and could detect an insect on the ground. It also incorporates inch-thick armour to protect its occupants and a 20mm cannon that can deliver 4,000 rounds a minute! It had been described as the 'ultimate fighting machine'.

The sound of rotor blades came whirring overhead. Instinctively I ducked. Chris followed suit. We waited about 30 seconds then I said, 'Why do we need to be listened upon? I mean we're not criminals!'

'Probably because some of us might try to escape. They're listening for escape plans.'

We heard voices from outside. I peeked out of the window. A single trooper was talking to his superior officer.

'Sir, my men are getting bored. They want us to release that gas in there so's we can all go home.'

'We have to wait for further instructions, lieutenant. Tell your men that its not long now!'

'Yes sir!'

The lieutenant saluted and walked out towards some hastily constructed tents that I hadn't noticed before. Again the chopper droned overhead.

'So that neat little bit of info will have to wait till tomorrow!'

In the morning , we were all called in for assembly. Mr G---- began:

'Today O--- School has been evacuated so there is nothing too close to us. I've not had chance to tell you about the helicopter you've obviously seen is patrolling the school in case anybody tries to escape. It is for other people's safety, as you may be carrying the disease. So, if anybody tries to escape they will be captured or I'm afraid...shot.' There was a strange silence that seemed to go on to eternity until .. 'As I said, it is for other people's safety'.

'I'm sure, 'El Supremo', 'cause I know different', I thought to myself.

'What about our safety ?' called somebody from the back.

'That depends on your commonsense. Stay inside school!'

'That's what you think!' I said to myself, ' 'cause I'm getting outta' here any way I can!'

When assembly was over we had free-time.

'Now that we can't be overheard, I've got something to tell you guys. Now I don't know when its gonna happen but those guys out there are gonna kill us all with some kinda gas.'

'Are you kidding' said Paul. 'We're all stuck in here because of some rabid mice!' he laughed. 'Gonna kill us ha!'

'Go on then Jonesy, you stay here and get killed. I'm gonna get outta here. Who's with me?'

'I'm in ', said Chris. 'I can't stay much longer in here anyway!'

'Me too', said Jez.

'Well, guess we'll be seeing ya then Paul', I said.

'Wait a minute...' the chubby Welsh boy began. 'I might as well tag along then'.

'What about me?' asked Jimmy. 'Can I come?'

'Oh no! You'd slow us down!' I said sarcastically.

'Oh yeah', Jimmy said, 'what about Taffy?'

'Jimmy you always take things so seriously!' laughed S.

Then the bell went for dinner.

'Well guys, GRUB UP!!' Everybody sprinted for the dinner hall.

'First years first', shouted Ethel. 'The rest of you , clear off!'

When we eventually got into dinner, I told them more of my plan. The cameras, although they might be able to see us, could not hear us and Blue Thunder patrolling outside certainly couldn't pick us up through everyone else's chatter. The plan was that we would leave the team area and stay up the uncameraed area which was the main corridor that goes straight through the school through to the science labs. We would then distract the guards at the main entrance, possibly with a smoke pellet. Our back-up plan was to go through the sewers but I didn't think it would be necessary.

Later we went into design and messed around in there. Suddenly I noticed a large cylinder being carried by a chopper over the school. On it was a marking of the skull and crossbones ! I suddenly realised what it was. It was the container holding the gas.

'Hey you guys get over here!' I yelled. They all ran over.

'Look there's the gas!'

Chris's mouth dropped open. 'Its Butolinus toxin!' he gasped.

'What the hell's that S.?' inquired Paul.

'It's one of the most dangerous substances known to man!' he replied.

'You sure, S?' I asked.

'Positive!'

'We'd better get outta here! The sooner the better!'

We had only planned how to escape about thirty minutes ago!

'Guess we're kinda rushed then. Paul... You get some matches..'

'Who off?' he queried.

'er.. a teacher or somebody..just get 'em!'

'S. get that smoke pellet ...and Jez come with me!'

We all split up.

Paul slowed down as he neared the corner. His objective was ahead of him. The matches lay a few inches away from the edge of the table. The owner, Mr. C--- was having a quiet smoke.

'Er.. Mr.C.' Paul said.

'Yes, what is it?' Mr. C. asked

Paul walked up and leaned on to the table. His folded arms hid the matches.

' Er..Do we still have to do our English homework?'

Mr. C. was silent for a moment and then said, 'I don't suppose so'

' Thankyou', said Paul. As he got up, he pulled the matches with him.

'Gott'em' he said triumphantly in his mind.

'Oy S!' Jez called across the room, 'Gi's a sweet!'

'I ain't got any!' S. called back.

'What's that in yer'and then?'asked R. inquisitively.

'Nothin!'

'Yes there is. I saw it, so what is it?'

'Mind your own business!' said S. and ran out of the room.

'I thought I saw 'im!' I whispered to Jez. 'Look, that trooper is in this school!'

'What's he doin'?' asked Jez.

'Dunno. Looks like he's talkin' to G---' I answered. 'He might be tellin' the teachers to clear out!'

'Let's get him as he comes round the corner', said Jez, obviously a little angry.

'Oh yeah, Superman, what with?' I asked Jez.

'With that star shaped thing you nicked from fabrics!' he said.

'Oh yeah! I'll go and get it!'

I sprinted up the corridor and to my bag. I extracted a small silver object with three small arms that could fold up. When opened out it was a star with six silver sharp points. All that while the camers had been watching. I sprinted back.

'Is he still there?' I whispered.

'Yeah!' came the reply, 'the door's just opened'.

The soldier was carrying a riot gun on his back. When he was near enough I threw the star. It hit him squarely in the back of the neck.

'Is he dead?' asked Jez.

'How do I know?' I replied. 'I've got his gun. Let's go.'

At that very same moment, a soldier appeared.

'Halt or I fire!'

He chased us down the corridor, firing shots around. We got into E----- long room . David H. was there.

'Hi Jez, Hi Mike', he chirped.

'Get down!' yelled Jez as a bullet whizzed overhead.

H. sprinted to open a window to climb out. Then there was a bright glare as several thin beams of lighted lanced out from the window's sides. David's hand was sliced off at the wrist. He screamed, the soldier entered the door and fired. The power of the bullet flung H. backwards. He lay still. Simultaneously I fired. The soldier was blown backwards. At the same moment, the recoil of the gun flung me backwards and I hit my head on the wall and blacked out. I must have only been out for a few seconds because the place was still chaotic.

H. got up. The bullet had just grazed his arm.

'Are you okay?' I drawled.

David still looked in quite a bit of pain

'Mike quick some more soldiers will be here soon!'

We ran outside, cameras following us always. We got to the main entrance. I fired as many times as I could. All the guards were wounded. We grabbed their guns and spare ammo and headed off to the field. Suddenly the helicopter began attacking. We darted back inside and headed for the community entrance. People started running in front of us. They ran on their way to the Gym but as they opened the door cameras were switched on and machine guns fired. All of the people were massacred.

Paul and S. appeared up the corridor and sprinted to us, Jimmy not far behind them. 'Looks like you made a botch up of this one!' said S.

'Yeah! Look , here's a gun and spare ammo but be careful. The recoils strong!' I said, quickly as I could.

'There they are!' came a voice

'Fire guys' I yelled over the din. We took them out as they appeared around the corner.

'Hey look a manhole cover!' shouted Paul.

'Shoot at it!' I yelled back. Paul did as I said and left a gaping hole in the floor.  
'S., get the matches off Paul. Light that smoke pellet...Jez, get down there....!'  
I followed Jez, then Paul, then S. The smoke pellet distracted the soldiers long enough.  
We all shot up the tunnel as fast as we could. I heard, from up the tunnel,  
'Look, a hole. Throw an incendiary bomb down there. Burn the buggers alive!'  
I heard a clink and a whoosh. Fire shot straight up the tunnel.'Move!!!' I screamed as loud as I could. The fire died down just before it reached us. Later, we came to a manhole. We got up and found ourselves at the Science labs. 'Great place to get caught!' I said to myself. I fired at the exit. A huge panel erupted off the side of the wall in a blinding flash.'That shoulda taken care of the laser!' I called triumphantly. We all piled out of the building.

None of us saw the man on the roof. He fired. S. was hit in the leg. At that moment, Blue Thunder swept over the school, canons blazing. It hit the soldier in the back accidentally. He was blown off the building. Then the helicopter attacked us. Jimmy and Paul dragged S. away, back into cover. Jez and I started blasting at it. It kept attacking, again and again. Then, I had an idea.

'Paul, ya got those matches, yeah?'

'Yeah! Why?' he asked.

'Just give 'em to me!'

He handed me the matches. I started firing like anything and at last penetrated the armour and hit the co-pilot. Then I sprinted across the field. The chopper followed blasting behind me. Then I felt a sharp agonizing pain in my arm. It had been hit.

I got to the hedge at the bottom of the field. My arm was in agony but I grasped the matchbox and struck a match. It lit. I threw it into some dry grass. It caught and soon dense smoke was belching across the field.

'Switch to heat sensors' said the pilot of Blue Thunder.

'Roger', said the co-pilot.

'Let's find that lackey!'

'I've found him....0.3 bearing 0.04 red!'

'Okay...FIRE!!!'

Shots leapt around me but the chopper pilot had miscalculated. He swept too low and flew straight into the flames.

'Let's get out of here!' screamed the pilot

'The fuel tanks caught fire. We're gonna die!'

At that moment there was a deafening explosion as the helicopter's debris were scattered across the field.

'Ribs's done it. Let's go!' shouted Jimmy.

'Wahooo!!!' yelled Jez. 'S., can ya' walk?'

'Aaargh! No, my leg hurts!' came the reply. Suddenly soldiers came piling through the door.

'Look OUT!!!' shouted Jimmy, but it was too late. S. was grabbed.

'Help!' he screamed.

'Shoot!' Paul yelled, 'shoot mun!'

Bullets started flying everywhere. I started back up the field, screaming in agony. I slung the gun over my shoulder. Jez, Paul and Jimmy were blasting away and lots of



soldiers were felled as they appeared through the door. Finally, I reached the others. I took the gun off my back and started shooting. S. managed to crawl back. 'Let's back off!' I grimaced. We started backwards and then started running. The soldiers started running too. They also began firing at us. But all of a sudden they stopped. 'Let's go back. We've got a mission to carry out!' shouted one of them. They all walked back but we carried on running as best as we could, dragging S.

### (3) 'Ribs' Runners' (T-Unit version.) used for comparative analysis, Chapter Ten.

#### Episode 1: The Secret Threat

1. As the helicopter patrolled past the window  
the sound of rotor blades woke me up.
2. 'S.', I inquired.
3. 'Yeah?' he replied.
4. 'You awake?' I asked.
5. 'I'm having trouble sleeping.'
6. 'Yeah! Me too'.
7. He stopped for a minute.
8. 'Has the chopper been round here yet?'
9. 'Fraid so.
10. It might still be monitoring us!'
  
11. The helicopter was a 'Blue Thunder', the only one of its kind.
12. It could 'listen in' on different conversations through a  
unique bugging device.
13. It also had heat sensors so it could detect a man crawling  
through undergrowth.
14. The searchlight it carried was 30,000,000 candlepower
15. and could detect an insect on the ground.
16. It also incorporates inch-thick armour to protect its occupants  
and a 20mm cannon that can deliver 4,000 rounds a minute!
17. It had been described as the 'ultimate fighting machine'.
  
18. The sound of rotor blades came whirring overhead.
19. Instinctively I ducked.
20. Chris followed suit.
21. We waited about 30 seconds
22. then I said, 'Why do we need to be listened upon?  
I mean we're not criminals!'
23. 'Probably because some of us might try to escape.
24. They're listening for escape plans.'
25. We heard voices from outside .
26. I peeked out of the window.
27. A single trooper was talking to his superior officer.
28. 'Sir, my men are getting bored.
29. They want us to release that gas in there so's we can all go home.'

30. 'We have to wait for further instructions, lieutenant.
31. Tell your men that its not long now!'
32. 'Yes sir!'
33. The lieutenant saluted
34. and walked out towards some hastily constructed tents  
that I hadn't noticed before.
35. Again the chopper droned overhead.
36. So that neat little bit of info will have to wait till tomorrow!'

#### Episode 2: In Assembly

37. In the morning , we were all called in for assembly.
38. Mr G. began: 'Today O--- School has been evacuated  
so there is nothing too close to us.
39. I've not had chance to tell you about the helicopter  
you've obviously seen is patrolling the school  
in case anybody tries to escape.
40. It is for other people's safety, as you may be carrying the disease.
41. So, if anybody tries to escape they will be captured
42. or I'm afraid...shot.'
43. There was a strange silence that seemed to go on to eternity until ..
44. 'As I said, it is for other people's safety'.
45. 'I'm sure, 'El Supremo', 'cause I know different', I thought to myself.
46. 'What about our safety ?' called somebody from the back.
47. 'That depends on your commonsense.
48. Stay inside school!'
49. 'That's what you think!' I said to myself, '  
'cause I'm getting outta' here any way I can!'

#### Episode 3: The plan

50. When assembly was over we had free-time.
51. 'Now that we can't be overheard, I've got something to tell you guys.
52. Now I don't know when its gonna happen
53. but those guys out there are gonna kill us all with some kinda gas.'
54. 'Are you kidding' said Paul.
55. 'We're all stuck in here because of some rabid mice!' he laughed.
56. 'Gonna kill us ha!'
57. 'Go on then Jonesy, you stay here
58. and get killed.
59. I'm gonna get outta here.
60. Who's with me?'
61. 'I'm in ', said Chris
62. 'I can't stay much longer in here anyway!'
63. 'Me too', said Jez.
64. 'Well, guess we'll be seeing ya then Paul', I said.
65. 'Wait a minute...' the chubby Welsh boy began.
66. 'I might as well tag along then'.
67. 'What about me?' asked Jimmy.

68. 'Can I come?'
69. 'Oh no! You'd slow us down!' I said sarcastically.
70. 'Oh yeah', Jimmy said, 'what about Taffy?'
71. 'Jimmy you always take things so seriously!' laughed S.
72. Then the bell went for dinner.
73. 'Well guys, GRUB UP!!'
74. Everybody sprinted for the dinner hall.
75. 'First years first', shouted Ethel.
76. 'The rest of you , clear off!'
77. When we eventually got into dinner, I told them more of my plan.
78. The cameras, although they might be able to see us, could not hear us
79. and Blue Thunder patrolling outside certainly couldn't pick us up through everyone else's chatter.
80. The plan was that we would leave the team area
81. and stay up the uncameraed area which was the main corridor that goes straight through the school through to the science labs.
82. We would then distract the guards at the main entrance, possibly with a smoke pellet.
83. Our back-up plan was to go through the sewers
84. but I didn't think it would be necessary.

#### Episode 4: Crisis and Response

85. Later we went into design
86. and messed around in there.
87. Suddenly I noticed a large cylinder being carried by a chopper over the school.
88. On it was a marking of the skull and crossbones !
89. I suddenly realised what it was.
90. It was the container holding the gas.
91. 'Hey you guys get over here!' I yelled.
92. They all ran over.
93. 'Look
94. there's the gas!'
95. Chris's mouth dropped open.
96. 'Its Butolinus toxin!' he gasped.
97. 'What the hell's that S?' inquired Paul.
98. 'It's one of the most dangerous substances known to man!' he replied.
99. 'You sure, S?' I asked.
100. 'Positive!'
101. 'We'd better get outta here!'
102. 'The sooner the better!'
103. We had only planned how to escape about thirty minutes ago!
104. 'Guess we're kinda rushed then.'
105. Paul... You get some matches..'
106. 'Who off?' he queried.
107. 'er.. a teacher or somebody..just get 'em!'

108. 'S. get that smoke pellet ...  
 109. and Jez come with me!  
 110. We all split up.  
  
 111. Paul slowed down as he neared the corner.  
 112. His objective was ahead of him.  
 113. The matches lay a few inches away from the edge of the table.  
 114. The owner, Mr. C., was having a quiet smoke.  
 115. 'Er.. Mr.C.', Paul said.  
 116. 'Yes, what is it?' Mr. C--- asked  
 117. Paul walked up  
 118. and leaned on to the table.  
 119. His folded arms hid the matches.  
 120. ' Er..Do we still have to do our English homework?'  
 121. Mr. C--- was silent for a moment  
 122. and then said, 'I don't suppose so'  
 123. ' Thankyou', said Paul.  
 124. As he got up, he pulled the matches with him.  
 125. 'Gott'em' he said triumphantly in his mind.  
  
 126. 'Oy S.!' Alan called across the room, 'Gi's a sweet!'  
 127. 'I ain't got any!' S. called back.  
 128. 'What's that in yer 'and then?' asked R. inquisitively.  
 129. 'Nothin!'  
 130. 'Yes there is.  
 131. I saw it,  
 132. so what is it?'  
 133. 'Mind your own business!' said S.  
 134. and ran out of the room.  
  
 135. 'I thought I saw 'im!' I whispered to Jez.  
 136. 'Look, that trooper is in this school!'  
 137. 'What's he doin'?' asked Jez.  
 138. 'Dunno.  
 139. Looks like he's talkin' to G---' I answered.  
 140. 'He might be tellin' the teachers to clear out!'  
 141. 'Let's get him as he comes round the corner', said Jez,  
       obviously a little angry.  
 142. 'Oh yeah, Superman, what with?' I asked Jez.  
 143. 'With that star shaped thing you nicked from fabrics!' he said.  
 144. 'Oh yeah! I'll go  
 145. and get it!'  
 146. I sprinted up the corridor and to my bag.  
 147. I extracted a small silver object with three small arms  
       that could fold up.  
 148. When opened out it was a star with six silver sharp points.  
 149. All that while the cameras had been watching.  
 150. I sprinted back.  
 151. 'Is he still there?' I whispered.

152. 'Yeah!' came the reply, 'the door's just opened'.  
153. The soldier was carrying a riot gun on his back.  
154. When he was near enough I threw the star.  
155. It hit him squarely in the back of the neck.  
156. 'Is he dead?' asked Jez.  
157. 'How do I know?' I replied.  
158. 'I've got his gun.'  
159. 'Let's go.'

#### Episode 5: The Escape.

160. At that very same moment, a soldier appeared.  
161. 'Halt or I fire!'  
162. He chased us down the corridor, firing shots around.  
163. We got into E----- long room .  
164. David Hewett was there.  
165. 'Hi Jez, Hi Mike', he chirped.  
166. 'Get down!' yelled Jez as a bullet whizzed overhead.  
167. Hewett sprinted to open a window to climb out.  
168. Then there was a bright glare as several thin beams of light  
    lanced out from the window's sides.  
169. David's hand was sliced off at the wrist.  
170. He screamed,  
171. the soldier entered the door  
172. and fired.  
173. The power of the bullet flung Hewett backwards.  
174. He lay still.  
175. Simultaneously I fired.  
176. The soldier was blown backwards.  
177. At the same moment, the recoil of the gun flung me backwards  
178. and I hit my head on the wall  
179. and blacked out.  
180. I must have only been out for a few seconds because the place  
    was still chaotic.  
181. Hewett got up.  
182. The bullet had just grazed his arm.  
183. 'Are you okay?' I drawled.  
184. David still looked in quite a bit of pain  
185. 'Mike quick some more soldiers will be here soon!'  
186. We ran outside, cameras following us always.  
187. We got to the main entrance.  
188. I fired as many times as I could.  
189. All the guards were wounded.  
190. We grabbed their guns and spare ammo  
191. and headed off to the field.  
192. Suddenly the helicopter began attacking.  
193. We darted back inside  
194. and headed for the community entrance.  
195. People started running in front of us.

196. They ran on their way to the Gym  
197. but as they opened the door cameras were switched on  
198. and machine guns fired.  
199. All of the people were massacred.

200. Paul and S. appeared up the corridor  
201. and sprinted to us, Jimmy not far behind them.  
202. 'Looks like you made a botch up of this one!' said Slater.  
203. 'Yeah! Look , here's a gun and spare ammo  
204. but be careful.  
205. The recoils strong!' I said, quickly as I could.  
206. 'There they are!' came a voice  
207. 'Fire guys' I yelled over the din.  
208. We took them out as they appeared around the corner.  
209. 'Hey look a manhole cover!' shouted Paul.  
210. 'Shoot at it!' I yelled back.  
211. Paul did as I said  
212. and left a gaping hole in the floor.  
213. 'S., get the matches off Paul.  
214. Light that smoke pellet...  
215. Jez, get down there....!'  
216. I followed Jez, then Paul, then S.  
217. The smoke pellet distracted the soldiers long enough.  
218. We all shot up the tunnel as fast as we could.  
219. I heard, from up the tunnel, 'Look, a hole.  
220. Throw an incendiary bomb down there.  
221. Burn the buggers alive!'  
222. I heard a clink and a whoosh.  
223. Fire shot straight up the tunnel.  
224. 'Move!!!' I screamed as loud as I could.  
225. The fire died down just before it reached us.  
226. Later we came to a manhole.  
227. We got up  
228. and found ourselves at the Science labs.  
229. 'Great place to get caught!' I said to myself.  
230. I fired at the exit.  
231. A huge panel erupted off the side of the wall in a blinding flash.  
232. 'That shoulda taken care of the laser!' I called triumphantly.  
233. We all piled out of the building.

#### Episode 6: Counter-attack and Victory

234. None of us saw the man on the roof.  
235. He fired.  
236. S. was hit in the leg.  
237. At that moment, Blue Thunder swept over the school,  
cannons blazing.  
238. It hit the soldier in the back accidentally.  
239. He was blown off the building.

240. Then the helicopter attacked us.  
 241. Jimmy and Paul dragged S. away, back into cover.  
 242. Jez and I started blasting at it.  
 243. It kept attacking, again and again.  
 244. Then, I had an idea.  
 245. 'Paul, ya got those matches, yeah?'  
 246. 'Yeah! Why?' he asked.  
 247. 'Just give 'em to me!'  
 248. He handed me the matches.  
 249. I started firing like anything  
 250. and at last penetrated the armour  
 251. and hit the co-pilot.  
 252. Then I sprinted across the field.  
 253. The chopper followed blasting behind me.  
 254. Then I felt a sharp agonizing pain in my arm.  
 255. It had been hit.  
 256. I got to the hedge at the bottom of the field.  
 257. My arm was in agony  
 258. but I grasped the matchbox  
 259. and struck a match.  
 260. It lit.  
 261. I threw it into some dry grass.  
 262. It caught  
 263. and soon dense smoke was belching across the field.  
  
 264. 'Switch to heat sensors' said the pilot of Blue Thunder.  
 265. 'Roger', said the co-pilot.  
 266. 'Let's find that lackey!'  
 267. 'I've found him....0.3 bearing 0.04 red!'  
 268. 'Okay....FIRE!!!'  
 269. Shots leapt around me  
 270. but the chopper pilot had miscalculated.  
 271. He swept too low  
 272. and flew straight into the flames.  
 273. 'Let's get out of here!' screamed the pilot  
 274. 'The fuel tanks caught fire.  
 275. We're gonna die!'  
 276. At that moment there was a deafening explosion as  
     the helicopter's debris were scattered across the field.  
  
 277. 'Rib's done it.  
 278. Let's go!' shouted Jimmy.  
 279. 'Wahooo!!!' yelled Jez.  
 280. 'S., can ya' walk?'  
 281. 'Aaargh! No, my leg hurts!' came the reply.  
 282. Suddenly soldiers came piling through the door.  
 283. 'Look OUT!!!' shouted Jimmy,  
 284. but it was too late.  
 285. S. was grabbed .

286. 'Help!' he screamed.  
287. 'Shoot!' Paul yelled, 'shoot mun!'  
288. Bullets started flying everywhere.  
289. I started back up the field, screaming in agony.  
290. I slung the gun over my shoulder.  
291. Jez, Paul and Jimmy were blasting away  
292. and lots of soldiers were felled as they appeared through the door.  
293. Finally, I reached the others.  
294. I took the gun off my back  
295. and started shooting.  
296. S. managed to crawl back.  
297. 'Let's back off!' I grimaced.  
298. We started backwards and then started running.  
299. The soldiers started running too.  
300. They also began firing at us.  
301. But all of a sudden they stopped.  
302. 'Let's go back.  
303. We've got a mission to carry out!' shouted one of them.  
304. They all walked back  
305. but we carried on running as best as we could, dragging S.



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